

SPIRITUAL FORMATION FOR CONTAGIOUS KINGDOM EXPANSION: A  
JOURNEY WITH GREATER EUROPE MISSION

A THESIS

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To Lisa Renee, my amazing wife

You connect me to the deepest parts of my soul and draw  
me into the wonder of our Triune Lord.

To my children, Megan and Michael

I've learned so much of God through you.

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true  
God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent,  
— *John 17:3*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The experience of knowing God and the impact that relationship has on spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness, and retention of missionaries within the context of Greater Europe Mission is the subject of this thesis. The purpose concerned understanding the state of spiritual formation practices among the missionaries as well as discerning the measure of influence they exert on the three aforementioned dimensions of missionary life. The project utilized the Spiritual Well Being Scale developed by Ellison and Paloutzian and a researcher-designed instrument to gather the information for statistical analysis and correlations.

The results indicated that the practice of regular spiritual disciplines definitely influence spiritual well-being within the population of missionaries of Greater Europe Mission. However, with regard to perceived ministry effectiveness and retention, the results were mixed and only a weak relationship was indicated, which was insufficient to meet the criteria of this study for a valid correlation.

The analysis of the spiritual life practices in concert with the statistical results provided insight for nurturing the spiritual formation of the missionaries of Greater Europe Mission and enhancing their experience of God in such a way so as to foster an environment for contagious Kingdom expansion.



## CHAPTER 1

### CULTURE CONFINES SPIRITUAL FORMATION

#### Introduction

The apostle Paul knew that the world in which one lives exerts an overwhelming influence on him and really does push him into its mold.<sup>1</sup> As cultures go, this is very hard to see and it is much like a fish swimming in water. The fish takes its environment for granted and does not consider the surrounding water, even if it is poisoned. As such the surrounding culture in which missionaries come to Christ and are formed also exerts its influence on how one lives out the Christian life and the spiritual disciplines that are emphasized, which impacts their experience of God. Yet that environment remains unquestioned, and as with the fish, it is considered normal. Eugene Peterson captures well the current state of Christianity in North America:

My concern is provoked by the observation that so many who understand themselves to be followers of Jesus, without hesitation, and apparently without thinking, embrace the ways and means of the culture as they go about their daily living “in Jesus’ name.” But the ways that dominate our culture have been developed either in ignorance or in defiance of the ways that Jesus uses to lead us as we walk the streets and alleys, hike the trails, and drive the roads of this God created, God-saved, God-blessed, God-ruled world in which we find ourselves. They seem to suppose that “getting on in the world” means getting on in the world on the world’s terms, and that the ways of Jesus are useful only in a compartmentalized area of life labeled “religious.”<sup>2</sup>

The church has imbibed the culture that surrounds it. This, of course, has impacted the spiritual formation of missionaries who have been sent to the field under the

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 12:2

<sup>2</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, March, 2007), 1.

influences of Modernity and the Enlightenment.<sup>3</sup> Currently most are under the influence of postmodernism, which at the very least is a reaction to the worldview flowing out of the Enlightenment and Modernity. It is necessary to explore how this global context has impacted the Christian and the biblical worldview, North American church culture, and the resultant spiritual formation practices of both existing and future missionaries. This is the broad setting or context in which the problem is created.

Current research indicates that the practice of classical spiritual disciplines can significantly influence one's experience of well-being.<sup>4</sup> Thus curiosity creates the desire to explore this relationship in the context of Greater Europe Mission's field missionaries, most of whom were formed spiritually under the influences of the Enlightenment, Modernity, and postmodernism. The research implies that regular practice of the classical spiritual disciplines work to countermand these influences while objectifying the person's relationship with God in their experience and affect.<sup>5</sup> The degree to which a person practices the spiritual disciplines, is the degree to which he will enjoy God, experience transformation,<sup>6</sup> express resilience, and persist in ministry.

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas C. Oden, "The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality," in *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, ed. David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 20.

<sup>4</sup> Leslie A. Andrews, "Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 27, no. 3 (1999): 107-118. "One may conclude, therefore, that in most instances practice of the spiritual disciplines will be positively associated with various dimensions of personal satisfaction. Though practice of the disciplines does not produce satisfaction, it does position an individual in a posture of openness to receive God's life-giving grace as it freely flows toward the person."

<sup>5</sup> Dallas Willard, *Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge* (New York, NY: Harper-Collins ebook, 2009), 3, 15, 141.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 46. "As I have explained in various writings, spiritual formation in Christ as portrayed in the Bible and seen in the "great ones" is not primarily behavior modification, though modification of behavior certainly is an outcome of it. Especially, it is not being trained into one or another outward cultural form of the Christian religion: Lutheran, Benedictine, Quaker, etc. That is how it has often been approached, but to suppose that it is identical with such training will only

So the need now is to delineate the researchable question, explore the context produced by the Enlightenment in North America with its resulting impact on the spiritual formation of missionaries as well as address the usefulness of the spiritual disciplines for transformation. Then it will be important to outline the prospective research design, and be transparent with the assumptions, anticipated outcomes, and the limitations of the study.

### **Statement Of Researchable Issues**

The goal is to research the current state of the practice of spiritual disciplines among the missionaries of Greater Europe Mission (GEM) and discover how that relates to their affective well-being (experience of God), their perceived effectiveness in ministry, and the implications for retention. A survey of current missionaries and their regular spiritual disciplines will be made and correlated with an existing instrument known as the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, which has had broad implementation and a longer history among the evaluative tools that were considered.<sup>7</sup> Additional questions will be asked to take into account perceived ministry effectiveness and the desire for long-term service. The goal is to see the correlation between their experience of God (understood as spiritual well-being) and their practice of the disciplines along with their ongoing potential for cross-cultural service.

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result in another form of “the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees” (see Mt 5:20) which leaves untouched the inward character of the person, the “heart,” the source of action and outward bearing (Mk 7:21-23). It is appropriate to regard this inner dimension of the self as the “spiritual” side of the human being, and then to think of “spiritual formation” as the process of reshaping or redeveloping it until it has, to a substantial degree, the character of the inner dimension of Jesus himself. This is a process in which the agency of the Holy Spirit is indispensable, along with other instrumentalities of God and his kingdom. One can think of the process as formation of the human spirit as well as formation by the divine Spirit, for it indeed is both.”

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer L. Fee and John A. Ingram, “Correlation of the Holy Spirit Questionnaire with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Spiritual Assessment Inventory,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 32, no. 2 (2004): 104-114.

The data will be analyzed for implications for future study and measures to undertake that will foster richer and deeper spiritual life among missionary personnel in Greater Europe Mission. The hope beyond this is that the fruit of the study will lead toward experiencing God's leadership in more fruitful expansion of the kingdom in Europe as a result. Another hope is that this study will assist in fostering an environment conducive to contagious Kingdom expansion.

### **The Setting and Context**

Considering current field missionaries of Greater Europe Mission and recognizing that many have been here for a significant period of their life, it becomes apparent that the forces that created the current context are huge and looming in history. As mentioned previously, these missionaries were formed in a context and that context participates in history as it unfolds. Many in the current generation of missionaries experienced spiritual formation under the dominance of Modernism, which was an outcome of the Enlightenment. The younger missionaries, the ones who arrived on the field within the last 10 to 15 years, have been under the growing influence of postmodernism. Both Modernism and Postmodernism have produced similar fruit when it comes to knowledge of the supernatural. So what is it about these eras that are so antithetical to the biblical worldview and the life experience that flows from it?

First, Thomas Oden understands the Modern era as spanning the 200 years from the beginning of the French Revolution to the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989.<sup>8</sup> Kraft begins earlier and elucidates things more specifically, focusing on the route to reason as the primary way of knowing:

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<sup>8</sup> Oden, "The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality," 23.

Western societies pass through the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and a wide variety of ripples and spinoffs from these movements. Scientists such as Bacon, Galileo, and Newton, and philosophers such as Hume, Descartes, Hegel, and Kant emerged—often paying a high social price for their ideas and inventions. The result: God and the church were dethroned, and the human mind came to be seen as savior. It is ignorance, not Satan we are to fight. And our weapons are human minds and technology. God, if there be a God, only helps those who do it all themselves. Thus, by the nineteenth century, God had become irrelevant to most Westerners.

Now our religion is science, and our priests are the scientists. For it is science that gives us control over the material universe and the promise of future control over everything else.<sup>9</sup>

To this Bosch agrees while noting a difference with regard to theology as an academic discipline, stating that “[s]ince the Enlightenment a different mode of rationality began to predominate. Reason supplanted faith as point of departure. Theology now differed from other academic disciplines only in its “object,” not in its method or point of departure. It was basically comparable to other disciplines.”<sup>10</sup> This obviously reflects a large separation between theology and practice, something that was unthought of during the time of the Reformation prior to the Enlightenment. Indeed, McGrath shares Bosch’s opinion:

... theology has come to be viewed as a professional academic discipline, set apart from the life of the church. The Enlightenment held that any form of religious commitment was an obstacle to objectivity, and thus cultivated the idea of religious neutrality in theology. This is now widely regarded as incorrect; nevertheless, the Enlightenment paradigm has had considerable influence within Western academic circles. The outcome of this is that “theology” has often been conceived as the academic study of religious concepts, with no connection with Christian life as a whole. This paradigm has been disastrous for the right understanding of the relation of theology and spirituality, as it deliberately eliminated such a connection in the first place.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural* (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1989), 31-33.

<sup>10</sup> David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 269.

<sup>11</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 27.

While the idea of religious neutrality in academic study has been found to be incorrect, nonetheless the Enlightenment and Modernity have left its mark on evangelicalism. As Oden states,

While present in fragmented ways before the French Revolution, these values have since dominated modern times, especially among its knowledge elites—those who trade in knowledge—the University, the press, jurisprudence, science, and the communications industry. This worldview has been blatantly promoted and championed by the modern institutions of academia, media, and liberal ecclesia, with few exceptions. There the assumptions, methods, values, and ideology of the French Enlightenment, coupled with German idealism, and British empiricism, were advertised, hyped, and peddled. These ideas have invaded and to some degree temporarily conquered many disciplines in academic communities, including those founded by evangelical educators (to name a few: Northwestern, Syracuse, Princeton, Baylor, Texas Christian, Dickinson, Oberlin, Wesley and, Emory, Drew, and the University of Toronto, and the list would continue for two pages).<sup>12</sup>

This limitation of knowledge to *reason* has seeped to the masses who until only recently imbibed the idea that science could lead society to utopia. “Our Enlightenment heritage has left us with a rationalistic, mind-oriented approach to everything. Even the Scriptures have come to be approached in a purely rational way.”<sup>13</sup> This of course severely discounts “normal” avenues of appropriating religious knowledge from experience.<sup>14</sup> As Oden explains, “...modernity has made an idol out of empirical observation so as to ignore any other—intuitive, personal, charismatic, ecstatic, prophetic, and any revelation-grounded—mode of knowing. It imagines that the only reliable form of knowing is found in laboratory experimentation and quantitative analysis.”<sup>15</sup> “There was little, if any, place

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<sup>12</sup> Oden, “The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality,” 24.

<sup>13</sup> Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, 41.

<sup>14</sup> Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, 44.

<sup>15</sup> Oden, “The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality,” 29.

in scientific knowledge for emotion, mystery, intuitive imagination, or the fulfillment of desires that science deemed unreal or illusory.”<sup>16</sup>

Certainly Evangelicalism has been impacted by this as “much of popular evangelical theology and apologetics yielded finally to the Enlightenment demand that theological conclusions be validated on non-theological grounds, including the empirical appeal to design in nature to validate divine creation and preservation.”<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Charles Kraft states,

We have learned from the world how to educate by giving our students knowledge, but the art of training in character has been largely lost. We teach church leaders how to think *about* God and, to a lesser extent, human relationships. But we do not usually teach them how to *relate* to God or to other humans. They learn to lecture rather than to communicate on the assumption—engendered by our experience with science—that what is most needed is more information rather than better relationships on both divine and human levels.<sup>18</sup>

This is the worldview that the West has been steeped in and even though Evangelicals theoretically believe in the supernatural, they have discounted the way the supernatural interacts with them and that has impacted even the way they understand Scripture. When Jesus says, “My sheep hear my voice”<sup>19</sup> or this, “Man shall not live by bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”<sup>20</sup> the reader naturally limits what that means today due to the influence of this worldview resulting from the arch of the Enlightenment. Kraft says that people do this without thinking since worldview often

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<sup>16</sup> John A. Sims, “Postmodernism: The Apologetic Imperative,” in *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, ed. David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 325.

<sup>17</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, “Postmodernism: The New Spectre?” in *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, ed. David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 47.

<sup>18</sup> Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, 41-42.

<sup>19</sup> John 10:27

<sup>20</sup> Matt 4:4 cf. Deut 8:3

operates at the subconscious level.<sup>21</sup> You can only imagine how this impacts personal devotion to God, the experience of God, and the possibilities and potentialities of a relationship with the Triune God of the universe. The expectations of what God does, how He interacts with His people, whether He cares or is involved and can act, impact all believers formed in this setting, including missionaries and the number of Christians willing to risk overseas service for the sake of the Kingdom.

Indeed in non-Western cultures contagious expansion of the Kingdom is occurring at a rapid pace and it flows from a worldview that is open to the supernatural. Currently there exist approximately 200 suspected church planting movements around the globe.<sup>22</sup> According to one church planting movement leader in Southeast Asia, “Prayer was also integrated into the lives of the new believers in Cambodia. They evidenced a strong sense of God’s direct involvement in their life. Signs and wonders, exorcisms, healing, and other manifestations of God’s power were commonplace.”<sup>23</sup> Addison echoes this as it concerns Christians of the global South, stating that they “have a supernatural view of the world and are more interested in personal salvation than in radical politics. They take the Bible seriously. They are more likely to believe that what they read in the gospels is happening in their midst. They believe the world of the apostles is a present reality.”<sup>24</sup> In

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<sup>21</sup> Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, 20. “We will hear defined worldview as the **culturally structured assumptions, values, and commitments underlying up peoples perception** of REALITY. Worldview is the major influence on how we perceive REALITY. In terms of its worldview assumptions, values and commitments, a society structures such things as what its people are to believe, how they are to picture reality, and how and what they are to analyze. People interpret and react on this basis reflexively without thinking.”

<sup>22</sup> David Garrison, “Church Planting Movement FAQs,” *Mission Frontiers* (2011).

<sup>23</sup> David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Bangalore, India: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 71.

<sup>24</sup> Steve Addison, *Movements That Change the World* (Smyrna, DE: Missional Press, 2009), 51.



all church planting movements extraordinary prayer and the authority of the Bible, often accompanied by signs and wonders, are distinguishing characteristics, which brings into sharp contrast the influence the anti-supernaturalism that the Enlightenment has fostered in the West.<sup>25</sup> For non-Westerners who are in Christ, it is clear that they expect much from God and He appears to be very involved from all reports.

With the exclusion of God and sources of knowledge other than reason, modernity could only move toward moral decline. Removing God from the marketplace of ideas and relegating Him to religion alone, meant that morality was up for grabs which ultimately has forced Western culture into “having to learn to live with the consequences of the sexual, personal, and familial wreckage to which this narcissistic money-grubbing, lust enslaved, porn-infested, abortive self-indulgence has led us. Its interpersonal fruits are friendlessness, disaffection, divorce, and the despairing substitution of sexual experimentation for intimacy.”<sup>26</sup> Since the worldview operates at a subconscious level, all this occurs without visible cause and effect and the malaise runs, as its core authority is now “reason” with no other basis for morality other than popular vote. Religion and the supernatural are marginalized, aspects of life segmented, and the segment given to spiritual matters as culturally understood is irrelevant to lifestyle.

With 200 years or more of scientific discovery behind us, despite the technological advances in the rising quality of life, the real felt issues seemed to touch the transcendent, relational and moral but with no standard of truth to guide. It is in this way,

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<sup>25</sup> Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 172, 222. Garrison quotes a friend from Bihar, India: “I interviewed about 50 believers,” he said, “Everyone of them knew Jesus as healer before they knew Him as Savior.” 233.

<sup>26</sup> Oden, “The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality,” 25.

postmodernism takes root and appears to have lost a guiding reference point:

“[postmodernism] holds that the so-called world that emerged intellectually from the sixteenth century onward has come to an end at the close of our twentieth century as surely as the so-called medieval era early on had its day.”<sup>27</sup> Along with that went any absolute basis given to man’s reason and the ultimacy of the “scientific” worldview.<sup>28</sup>

Yet it “retains a number of elements that characterize Modernism: the rejection of transcendent deity and of miracle and the disavowal of supernatural revelation and of absolute truth, fixed meaning, and purpose. It repudiates all external, objective, transcendent authority, scientific authority also, and the mainly functional authority of religious literature, the Bible included, in its life transforming role in a believing community.”<sup>29</sup> Thus postmodernism shares many things that flow from the Enlightenment and Modernism.

It’s this large and broad context that spans the whole of the West that touches both the practices and expectations of spiritual formation. The Enlightenment and Modernity placed the focus of spiritual formation on the mind and reason. Evangelicals indeed engage with God, but their expectations of His experienced presence are minimal and reductionistic to the level of man’s reason. The primary disciplines are prayer and Bible reading, but not much is expected from prayer since God at best is distant and Bible reading is primarily academic rather than relational. As such, it is necessary to share briefly the story of Greater Europe Mission since it was founded in this context and then

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<sup>27</sup> Henry, “Postmodernism: The New Spectre?” 36.

<sup>28</sup> Henry, “Postmodernism: The New Spectre?” 48.

<sup>29</sup> Henry, “Postmodernism: The New Spectre?” 48.

continue with examining North American culture and church as that is the background out of which our missionaries come and are first formed.

### The Story of Greater Europe Mission

Greater Europe Mission was initially incorporated as the European Bible Institute in 1949 by a former Navy Chaplain, Dr. Robert Evans.<sup>30</sup> The vision was to reach Europe through trained Europeans. Evangelism efforts after the war bore significant fruit during Dr. Evans tenure as the executive director for Youth for Christ International, yet those same efforts pointed to a significant need throughout Europe: the lack of trained Christian leaders to disciple those who had just come to faith.<sup>31</sup> This coupled with the influence of Dawson Trotman among others, caused Evans to focus on founding a theological institution that would raise up leaders from among the nationals who could lead the churches and train disciples (based on 2 Tim 2:2). The fact that Evans saw as the key to reaching Europe the training of leaders in an institutional setting reflects the influence of both the Enlightenment and Modernism within the cultural milieu of the West during the middle of the last century. The name of the North American agency founded to support the work of the European Bible Institute was changed to Greater Europe Mission in 1952.

The mission expanded in the ensuing 60 years in significant ways. First, the organization grew from the humble beginnings of one missionary couple in one country to nearly 400 missionaries serving in roughly 30 countries of Europe at its zenith in personnel. During that time, Greater Europe Mission either established or assisted in the

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<sup>30</sup> Robert J. Cambell, *Light for the Night in Europe: Reflections on a Lifetime of Ministry* (Chicago, IL: Greater Europe Mission, 1999), xvii-xix.

<sup>31</sup> Cambell, *Light for the Night in Europe*, 25-28.

founding of 13 college-level Bible Institutes and 6 Seminaries throughout Europe.<sup>32</sup> This was all a part of a desire to see Europeans equipped to reach greater Europe, which has been a core emphasis in all GEM has done. Thousands of Europeans have been trained through these institutions. Along with the establishment of theological institutions of higher learning, GEM personnel played a major role in church planting almost since the beginning, and 100s of churches have been established as a result.<sup>33</sup> Beyond that there have been music ministries, art ministries, evangelistic ministries, student ministries, video and media ministries, etc., that have had a significant impact on the evangelization of Europe.<sup>34</sup>

Currently GEM has almost 300 missionaries serving in 27 countries throughout Europe and North Africa in a wide variety of ministries as previously noted. The trend leans more toward church planting in the mission, yet theological education remains a strong aspect of what many GEM missionaries are doing. A large portion of personnel have advanced theological and academic degrees even though they may not be serving in an institutional capacity, yet during the current decade, fewer new personnel are arriving on the field with advanced degrees. The level of academic training points to the influence of the Enlightenment, dependence on reason in ministry, and empiricism in the approach

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<sup>32</sup> Cambell, *Light for the Night in Europe*, xi, 321. Cambell lists 28 Institutions in which Greater Europe Mission has played a role throughout its history. Many of these institutions are now nationalized and some have been closed. The 19 mentioned are ones in which GEM had a role of establishing.

<sup>33</sup> Cambell, *Light for the Night in Europe*, 325-26. Here are documented 76 church plants and the most recent date listed is 1996, reflecting a gap. Several churches have been planted since that time and many times that through Europeans impacted by GEM's ministries. As Cambell notes, it is impossible to count churches started through graduates of GEM's institutions, and through things such as the Alliance for Saturation Church Planting, of which GEM was a founding member.

<sup>34</sup> Cambell, *Light for the Night in Europe*, 323-323, 327-28. Countless ministry venues have been pursued by GEM personnel over the years and it is impossible to state the full scope. Cambell does a great job in capturing the overall picture.

to mission and vision of the organization. While the numbers of people entering the organization with advanced degrees has significantly declined, still most come with at least a college education.

With over 20 plus years in missions, of which 10 of those have been in leadership of missionaries with GEM and other organizations, many observations have led to this desire to investigate the relationship of one's spiritual formation practices with well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness, and retention. Obviously the observed attrition over the past decade causes wonder about depth of spiritual life. Along with that a number of missionaries struggle with their identity and purpose once they cross the ocean, indicating the experienced depth of their call is fragile. Some enter into conflict with their associates over seemingly petty issues. Others struggle with following field or organizational leadership or even processes designed to help them reach their full potential as missionaries. Some struggle with even the courage to engage with their receiving culture or what they are to be doing in ministry. Low resilience, unwillingness to forgive, resentment, and lack of contentment with changing circumstances, and even moral failure have all had their place among the missionaries of Greater Europe Mission. Some of the issues are strong enough to cause the missionaries to return to their country of origin.

Considering the task and work of the missionary, one would expect the cultivation of a spiritual life that would allow them to navigate and negotiate many such issues well. Often that is not the case. In many instances, rather than their hearts being directed to God in prayer, reflection or the Word, they seek human insight, proven approaches or structural change, again pointing to the impact of the existing Enlightenment-influenced

worldview as it touches their spiritual life. Prayer also doesn't seem to have the place it once did in the missionary's approach to ministry. Recognizing the presence and work of God in all of life circumstance does not come easily for them. However, even more important, their approaches to resolution of their issues do not reflect their functioning based on a conviction of God's radical love for them and those they either work with or serve in ministry. God appears to be distant almost in a deistic sense, rather than radically and intimately involved up close. It is as if the supernatural is not. God and His love do not appear to be an experienced reality but rather a reference point for ministry. We are in the garden, but alone.

Without God being experienced in His person as present, involved, loving, and as conferring blessing in transformation today, passion in and for ministry then grows weak. Where that sense of His presence is strong, prayer is evident as well as passion for ministry. Excitement and expectation of God at work exudes from those missionaries where there seems to be a stronger sense of a cultivated spiritual life. It is that excitement about God and experience of Him that will lead to the cultivation of an environment for fostering contagious Kingdom expansion. However, if pro-active cultivation of the spiritual life is neglected, then there is little chance for this outcome.

Obviously for the sake of elucidating the reasons for wanting to do this research and explore the connection of spiritual life practices to well being, perceived ministry effectiveness and retention, there is no need to paint an overly negative picture of GEM and its culture. If such appears to be the case, it is necessary to clarify that here the problem instances, either observed or experienced during this writer's time with GEM, are being examined. On the whole, GEM personnel come from the cream of the spiritual

crop and are men and women of substantial character. It is a privilege to serve among such men and women. However, that does not mean they are untouched by the broader cultural worldview which as stated previously has at best a non-supernatural and at worst an anti-supernatural perspective. At the same time, there are missionaries whose passion for God and His work seem to reflect depth in their spiritual life. It is hoped that the research will indicate such and help guide the cultivation of spiritual formation practices for our missionaries in the future.

So both the current North American cultural context and the experience of attrition within GEM over the past decade provoke the question as to what role spiritual life and spiritual disciplines play in the retention of missionaries, their experience of God (Spiritual Well-Being as previously indicated) and perceived ministry effectiveness. Some of GEM's attrition is natural and expected; some gives reason to puzzle. However, the continuing decline of interest among believers to enter into overseas service whether with GEM or other organizations causes one to wonder about the depth of spiritual experience and the level of spiritual formation taking place in North America. While much of this has been hinted at previously, the data from North American culture that follow appears to support the need for greater depth and emphasis in the area of spiritual formation.

#### North American Culture And Church

The most recent statistics from both PEW<sup>35</sup> and the American Religious Identification Survey<sup>36</sup> reflect a gargantuan shift in the levels of non-belief. This of course reflects the

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<sup>35</sup> "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic February 2008," *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, directed by Luis Lugo (February, 2008), <http://religions.pewforum.org/> (accessed December 10, 2009).

fruit of Modernity in culture and education. Accordingly, “The “Nones” (no stated religious preference, atheist, or agnostic) continue to grow, though at a much slower pace than in the 1990s, from 8.2% in 1990, to 14.1% in 2001, to 15% in 2008.”<sup>37</sup> The PEW Forum puts the number of nonreligious at 16.1 percent and among those who are under 30 years of age the number rises to 25 percent.<sup>38</sup> As Kraft states,

such Enlightenment influence has become so strong in our societies, modern Westerners—both non-Christian and Christian—find it extremely difficult to believe in angels, Satan, demons, and even God. Whether or not real spiritual power can be exercised through prayer, then, is seriously questioned both outside and inside our churches. For the spiritual real is not considered scientifically or rationally verifiable.<sup>39</sup>

This is indeed what is seen from the data on attrition from religion in the survey information; a lack of relevance to life in the way Christianity is lived and expressed under the influence of the Enlightenment.

While America still remains a very religious country, its depth in spiritual formation has been neglected as a focus among evangelicals. As early as 1977, Robert Webber attempted to reorient evangelicals to this need by issuing *The Chicago Call* at a conference he organized for evangelical leaders and scholars. In that document a call was made for a more substantive and authentic spirituality reflective of the depth contained in

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<sup>36</sup> Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, “American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS 2008),” *American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS 2008)* (Hartford Connecticut: Trinity College, March, 2009), [http://www.americanreligionsurvey-aris.org/reports/ARIS\\_Report\\_2008.pdf](http://www.americanreligionsurvey-aris.org/reports/ARIS_Report_2008.pdf) (accessed December 7, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> Kosmin, “American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS 2008),” 2.

<sup>38</sup> “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic February 2008,” 5., “The survey finds that the number of people who say they are unaffiliated with any particular faith today (16.1%) is more than double the number who say they were not affiliated with any particular religion as children. Among Americans ages 18-29, one-in-four say they are not currently affiliated with any particular religion.”

<sup>39</sup> Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, 26.



the spiritual practices of the historic church.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, the document bemoaned American evangelicalism as spiritually weak and highly individualistic.<sup>41</sup> Richard Foster noticed similar things within evangelicalism around the same time and this is why he wrote *The Celebration Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. “Superficiality,” he writes, “is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.”<sup>42</sup>

While others joined Webber and Foster in their call for greater attention given to spiritual formation, as the survey information reflects, the churches have yet to heed the call in full for North America. “Although formation describes the central work of the church, and despite a push for resolutions, programs, and resources, the fact remains that spiritual formation has not been the priority of the North American church that it should be.”<sup>43</sup> Recently a major North American mega-church made the admission that spiritual maturity was not a natural by-product of church activity or programs.<sup>44</sup> Indeed,

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<sup>40</sup> Robert Webber, “The Chicago Call” (1977), <http://smallvoices.net/sv5/chicago.htm> (accessed January 8, 2011).

<sup>41</sup> Gary J. Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 170.

<sup>42</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), 1.

<sup>43</sup> Jim Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation As If the Church Mattered Growing in Christ Through Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 16.

<sup>44</sup> Greg L. Hawkins and others, *Reveal: Where Are You?* (Barrington, IL: Willow Creek Resources, 2007), 73. In looking at the *Reveal* study, it is apparent that personal devotional practices are not the habit of the vast majority of the church, and in particular, the mega-church. This is generally because the model to date is to emphasize programs and activity, and not to prioritize developing a relationship with God, intimacy with God, intimacy with others. Ultimately it is the neglect of the great commandment. While the study seeks to present the results in a positive light their conclusion is revealing: “for example when we did this at Willow, we discovered we had no ministry that trained people in personal and spiritual disciplines. It’s a huge mess we are in the process of addressing.”

the *Reveal* study shows that 70 percent of the regular attenders do not prioritize their spiritual life<sup>45</sup> and among the most mature in the congregation only 60 percent pray daily and only 40 percent open their Bibles regularly.<sup>46</sup> These statistics are keenly similar to the ones reflected in the PEW U. S. Religious Landscape Survey in which it was reported, “A majority of U.S. adults (58%) say they pray at least once a day outside of religious services, and 75% pray at least once a week.”<sup>47</sup> That same study indicates, “About a third of U.S. adults (35%) say they read Scripture at least once a week, and an additional 18% read Scripture occasionally.”<sup>48</sup> The study also indicates that on the whole 78% of the members of evangelical churches pray daily outside of religious services and approximately 60% read the Scriptures at least weekly.<sup>49</sup> It strikes at the core of evangelicalism to see that one of its leading mega-churches does not fare statistically better than the culture as a whole when it comes to the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible reading. Indeed, what Richard Lovelace wrote almost 25 years ago appears to be ringing true today: “modern evangelicalism is in danger of becoming a tame lecture circuit, a kind of sanctified show business.”<sup>50</sup>

While the statistics allow insight into North American church culture and its spiritual life practices, they also point to the context in which missionaries are formed and the

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<sup>45</sup> Hawkins, *Reveal*, 49.

<sup>46</sup> Hawkins, *Reveal*, 53.

<sup>47</sup> “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, Religious Beliefs and Practices: Diverse and Politically Relevant June 2008,” *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, directed by Luis Lugo (June, 2008), <http://religions.pewforum.org/> (accessed December 10, 2009), 44.

<sup>48</sup> “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, Religious Beliefs and Practices,” 49.

<sup>49</sup> “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, Religious Beliefs and Practices,” 46, 49.

<sup>50</sup> Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 237.

spiritual formation habits that are subconsciously assumed. This is true for the missionaries currently on the field as well as for those who will pursue a call to be on the field. As previously stated, the “spiritually mature” in evangelical churches today do not necessarily have well developed spiritual disciplines or habits, yet they possess the greatest potential for responding to a call for overseas service in the current cultural context. As such, it can only be concluded that the spiritual practices of the missionaries coming from such a cultural milieu would be similar and due to the anti-supernatural overlay of the Enlightenment, their expectations of God would be minimal.

### Existing Missionaries

The contemporary evangelical culture is not and has not been conducive to producing depth in the spiritual life of its people. While missionaries generally have greater depth in their spiritual practices, that does not necessarily mean that their spiritual life has been developed to the level necessary to meet the stresses of cross-cultural ministry. In fact, Steve Hoke and Bill Taylor stress the need for missionaries to be engaged in adequate spiritual formation and disciplines prior to departure for the field. They indicate in a book they coauthored to assist prospective missionaries in preparing to fulfill their call that the first of three prime reasons for early return for missionary service was inadequate spirituality.<sup>51</sup> “Spiritual formation is essential throughout the overall development of a missionary. It does not end when the missionary arrives on the field. On the contrary, a new level of spiritual development begins at this point. The real test of the missionary is

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<sup>51</sup> Stephen Hoke and William D. Taylor, *Global Mission Handbook: A Guide for Crosscultural Service* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 47.

whether the person is able to cope with the new spiritual realities and demands of missionary life.”<sup>52</sup>

A study of over 390 missionaries serving in 32 countries in 1987 revealed that 60 percent pray on average between 11 and 30 minutes a day, yet most struggle with their mind wandering in prayer.<sup>53</sup> With regard to reading the Bible, 70 percent read it daily for between 11 and 30 minutes while only 12 percent exceed that amount of time.<sup>54</sup> However, more than 30 percent identified that maintaining a systematic devotional time was their greatest spiritual struggle; and as the author of the study said, “No other problems in the Christian life even came close to this one.”<sup>55</sup> More than two-thirds of those missionaries in the study indicated they had experienced discouragement and virtually all had had to deal with frustration and tension.<sup>56</sup> Occasional anger was a problem for 71 percent of respondents and almost 20 percent said it was a frequent issue.<sup>57</sup> The survey also indicated that sexual temptation is an issue and some even fall into immorality.<sup>58</sup> The study covers more issues, but these are deemed sufficient to indicate the level of spiritual formation within the missionary community. While the level of spiritual discipline and practice is higher among missionaries than in the North

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<sup>52</sup> William David Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1997), 31.

<sup>53</sup> Phil Parshall, “How Spiritual Are Missionaries?” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1987): 10-16.

<sup>54</sup> Parshall, “How Spiritual Are Missionaries?” 10.

<sup>55</sup> Parshall, “How Spiritual Are Missionaries?” 10.

<sup>56</sup> Parshall, “How Spiritual Are Missionaries?” 13.

<sup>57</sup> Parshall, “How Spiritual Are Missionaries?” 13.

<sup>58</sup> Parshall, “How Spiritual Are Missionaries?” 13-14.

American sending culture, it appears to be consistent with the influences flowing out of that milieu and in step with the other survey data.

In the opinion of this author, there is much room for improvement in the area of spiritual formation and discipline among missionaries. However, it is difficult to ensure on-site growth and development in this area among missionaries since

Spiritual development does not lend itself to a credit hour system, and it is difficult to include on an official transcript. Therefore, it tends to appear as an appendage to the “real” program. Yet there are few personnel involved in missionary training programs, formal or non-formal who would not agree that spiritual maturity is the key to perseverance and effectiveness in Christian ministry. The attrition research gives its own endorsement to this conviction.<sup>59</sup>

Thus even among missionaries the importance of growth in the application of spiritual disciplines in ongoing spiritual formation is imperative.

#### Future Missionaries

As we’ve seen from current missionaries, spiritual life in formation is a challenge on the field. Many struggle with the discipline to do this regularly. To the advantage of the postmoderns and future missionaries, their disenchantment with Enlightenment modernity has opened them up to the supernatural. John Sims comments on the inclinations of the current generation:

Modern science's inability to satisfy the spiritual needs of those who place too much trust in its methods, or dispel the cynicism of those who never criticize its results, does not mean that postmoderns are not ready to give up fruits of the scientific enterprise by returning to some idyllic prescientific era....But it is a fact of our time that more and more wish to return to spiritual roots and have consequently questioned the ability of science to know the fullness of reality that was presumed in the modern era. Postmoderns have returned in large numbers to Romanticism's glorification of emotion and irrationality as well as the Romantics' steam for the wisdom of nature and native cultures....Barriers to belief in supernatural and spiritual realities have crumbled like the Berlin wall and the atheistic ideology that supported it....the word

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<sup>59</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 218-19.

spiritual, a word that had essentially lost its meaning and relevance in the modern culture, is now back. And it is back with a vengeance.<sup>60</sup>

So emphasizing spiritual formation for the future generation will be something they see as positive, but may struggle in areas of discernment due to an over emphasis on emotion or experience. They are willing to trust other sources of knowledge than reason. Dallas Willard has also recently written on the types of knowledge available to us, and in particular, how knowledge of Christ is acquired.<sup>61</sup> Willard states this knowledge is available to the one who is “*liv[ing] interactively with [Christ] right now where [he is] in [his] daily activities. This is the spiritual life in Christ.*”<sup>62</sup> While the future generation of missionaries has an openness and hunger for this knowledge, they lack the discipline to pursue it on their own, yet they are desirous of help in maintaining their spiritual life.<sup>63</sup>

Evidence of the current younger generation’s struggle to be disciplined in their devotional life is reflected in a survey by the PEW Research Center on Millennials: “Consistent with their lower levels of affiliation, young adults engage in a number of religious practices less often than do older Americans, especially the oldest group in the population (those 65 and older). For example, the 2007 Religious Landscape Survey finds that 27% of young adults say they read Scripture on a weekly basis, compared with 36% of those 30 and older.”<sup>64</sup> While the PEW report covers Millennials in general, they also

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<sup>60</sup> Sims, “Postmodernism: The Apologetic Imperative,” 325.

<sup>61</sup> Willard, *Knowing Christ Today*, 60, 139.

<sup>62</sup> Willard, *Knowing Christ Today*, 139.

<sup>63</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 48.

<sup>64</sup> Andrew Kohut, “Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next” (This report on the values, attitudes, behaviors and demographic characteristics of the Millennial generation. Pew Research Center, February, 2010), 92.

document the spiritual practices gap within the evangelical sub-culture and contrast it with the previous generations as seen in the table<sup>65</sup> below:

<b>Religious Practices in Contrast</b>				
<b>Table 1-1</b>	<b>Read Scripture Weekly</b>	<b>Pray Daily</b>	<b>Meditate Weekly</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Evangelical Protestant Churches</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>9,472</b>
<b>Ages 18-29</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>929</b>
<b>Ages 30+</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>8,352</b>

While the report reflects that the intensity of commitment to their faith is as strong as previous generations, their practices indicate difficulty in maintaining the disciplines.<sup>66</sup> As can be seen, the gaps are substantial, especially if one considers the challenges of missionary life and the spiritual resources necessary to adequately deal with them in accord with the fruits of the Spirit.<sup>67</sup> After all, “The high cost of our discipleship begins with the cost of discipline-ship—being willing to devote a portion of each day in solitude, silence, and complete surrender.... We don't become healthier disciples of Christ by osmosis—it won't happen by wishful thinking!”<sup>68</sup>

Thus the future generation of missionaries will need assistance and encouragement in developing spiritual formation practices. While the issues appear different among the differing generations of missionaries, the church both began and sustained these spiritual

<sup>65</sup> Kohut, “Millennials,” 92, a portion from the table focusing on the Evangelical Sub-culture, comparing the Millennial Generation to the previous ones.

<sup>66</sup> Kohut, “Millennials,” 89, 92. “Among Millennials who are affiliated with a religion, however, the intensity of their religious affiliation is as strong today as among previous generations when they were young. More than one-third of religiously affiliated Millennials (37%) say they are a “strong” member of their faith, the same as the 37% of Gen Xers who said this at a similar age and not significantly different than among Baby Boomers when they were young (31%).”

<sup>67</sup> Gal 5:22-23

<sup>68</sup> Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Disciple: Ten Traits of a Vital Christian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 71.

practices through the centuries for reasons of assuring ministers of the Gospel, be they pastors, missionaries or laity, that they could live life in union with Christ.

### Impact Field Leader Survey and Spiritual Life

In 2008-09 a number of missions organizations, including Greater Europe Mission, participated in a survey focused on helping existing leadership improve effectiveness in fulfilling their roles.<sup>69</sup> The survey sample focused on mission leaders from four agencies, with a total of 193 leaders participating whose countries of origin spanned five continents, the vast majority being North American.<sup>70</sup> The sample was dominantly, but not exclusively, made up of men and more than 50 percent were in field or regional leadership positions.<sup>71</sup> Most respondents were middle-age and none were younger than 30. Some of the results touched on spiritual life issues, and were indicative of a need for improvement. This survey, if it can be put in these terms, looks at leaders of leaders within a missionary context, so it too will provide an indication of spiritual formation practices as an area of emphasis or neglect.

Only 30 percent of the respondents indicated that interactions with supervisors included questions concerning the state of their soul, relationship with God and spiritual well-being.<sup>72</sup> As such, spiritual formation ranked last as a topic regularly discussed between the missionary and his supervisor, even though 95 percent of the respondents felt

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<sup>69</sup> Ken Harder and Scott E. Shaum, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," unpublished Power Point Presentation and Survey Report PDF file to Greater Europe Mission, Monument, CO, August 24, 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," slide 5 of a results presentation.

<sup>71</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," slide 6 of a results presentation.

<sup>72</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," slide 15 of a results presentation.



they could speak openly and freely with their leader.<sup>73</sup> Queries concerning soul health received the same rank, whether the missionary was initiating or responding to the topic. While 25 percent considered spiritual vitality a strength, another 30 percent saw it as an area for further development.<sup>74</sup>

An interesting note on the practices of spiritual disciplines beyond prayer and Bible reading concerned the practices of reflection, Sabbath and friendship. Approximately 9 percent of mission leaders take time for reflection (defined as a segment of 4 hours or more) once a month or more. The vast majority takes time for reflection in this way less than once a quarter and 34 percent never do it.<sup>75</sup> However, almost 3/4ths of the mission leaders surveyed find time to practice Sabbath at least twice monthly.<sup>76</sup> While not qualified as spiritual friendship, more than 86 percent reported having a replenishing friendship with another person.<sup>77</sup>

Considering this survey examines leaders, it is interesting that the results do not appear out of line with that which has been presented thus far in this chapter. While missionary leaders reflect somewhat greater strength in the area of spiritual formation, and they should, their practices have room for much improvement. Since the baseline for the standard practice in spiritual formation has already been set by the sending culture, to call this level of implementation of spiritual disciplines sufficient for increasing one's

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<sup>73</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," slide 16, 18 of a results presentation.

<sup>74</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," slide 24 of a results presentation.

<sup>75</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," slide 22 of a results presentation.

<sup>76</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," slide 22 of a results presentation.

<sup>77</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," slide 23 of a results presentation.

enjoyment of God and life as well as on-going awareness of God's presence may be a stretch.

In fact, as one delves deeper into the survey and examines the responses to specific questions, more is revealed. Maintaining *consistent* intimacy with Christ was seen as a key strength by only 23 percent of those surveyed, where 21 percent indicated it was one of their *key* areas of development.<sup>78</sup> While only 15 percent declared that balancing work and family life as a key strength, 40 percent indicated it was a key need.<sup>79</sup> As to managing conflict constructively, only 20 percent indicated this was a strength. The survey responses indicate sexual temptation is real, as the respondents indicated struggles related to pornography and inappropriate behaviors and those responses were not inconsistent with the survey previously described and done by Phil Parshall in 1987.<sup>80</sup>

### **Spiritual Formation and the Disciplines**

It is apparent at this point, the Enlightenment and Modernity have impacted evangelicals with regard to their spiritual disciplines and their expectations of benefits from their exercise. This too has impacted missionaries in their formation experience prior to departing to the field and it also sets their expectations as to what it means to be spiritual. The primary spiritual practices employed and discussed here were prayer and Bible reading. There are many more.<sup>81</sup> With regard to the Impact Survey, other spiritual formation practices were noted, such as Sabbath, reflection, and friendship. On the

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<sup>78</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," 12, 13 question 23 and 24.

<sup>79</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," 12, 13, question 23 and 24.

<sup>80</sup> Harder, "IMPACT Field Leader's Survey," 22, question 72 and 73, and Parshall, "How Spiritual Are Missionaries?" 5.

<sup>81</sup> Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

whole, while missionaries may exceed North American culture in the practice of certain spiritual disciplines both the Impact Survey and the study done by Phil Parshall indicate that missionaries would benefit from an emphasis on spiritual formation. The same is true for missionaries yet to arrive on the field.

So why an emphasis on spiritual disciplines and spiritual formation? First, it derives from a desire to promote a Christlike life.<sup>82</sup> Secondly, systematic application of the spiritual disciplines open a person to deep graces of God for transformation that touch the emotions, behavior, and foster a deep knowledge of God.<sup>83</sup> Third, it is believed that systematically practiced, the spiritual disciplines can overcome some of the residual effects of the Enlightenment's anti-supernaturalism. Further, practice of the disciplines impact life satisfaction:

Practice of spiritual disciplines was positively associated with family life and ministry satisfaction. Relationship with the triune God is personal in nature. It involves wholehearted assent to the claims of Christ as expressed in Scripture. Such assent manifests itself in freely given obedience and loving devotion to Jesus Christ, God's Son....Second, practicing the spiritual disciplines cultivates and sustains relationship with God. Spiritual disciplines do not guarantee a life-giving relationship. They do, however, open the channels through which God's grace can flow to his children. Each discipline is an act of bowing to the sovereignty of God as persons both listen to and speak with God.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Rom 8:29, Eph 5:1

<sup>83</sup> John 17:3, 2 Cor 3:18, see also G. Michael Leffel, "Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 1. Prospects and Prescriptions for Reconstructive Dialogue," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 263-280, and G. Michael Leffel, "Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 2. Implicit Morality and "Minimal Prosociality," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 281-297, and G. Michael Leffel, "Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 3. A Moral Motive Analysis," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 298-316.

<sup>84</sup> Andrews, "Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries," 117.

The same article also states:

The data in this study support the premise that satisfaction with one's spiritual life is nurtured and supported in the context of caring relationships and the practice of the spiritual disciplines. Furthermore, having the capacity to forgive others and oneself, to reframe life's events from a divine perspective, and to possess an inner sense that God has called one to this ministry offer an interpretive framework which also seems to contribute to heightened satisfaction.<sup>85</sup>

As such, the sustained practice of the spiritual disciplines, appropriate for the person, will lead to a greater satisfaction in life and ministry and sense of well-being. Further, as missionaries grow and mature through consistent practice, their ministries will grow in effectiveness — which will also contribute to satisfaction levels. Indeed, Steve Addison indicates that “[e]very dynamic movement [of God in history] finds a unique mix of spiritual disciplines” associated with it.<sup>86</sup> After all, this would just be following the example of the great apostle: “But what is clear from Paul's letters is that he was a *prayerer* before he was a “missioner” or a thinker. His life was devoted to prayer; and his relationship with his converts was primarily sustained by way of thanksgiving and prayer....Paul did not simply believe in prayer, or talk about prayer. He prayed, regularly and continuously, and urged the same on his churches (1 Thess 5:16-18).”<sup>87</sup> Paul's praying led to his living out the Gospel and the impact he left behind speaks volumes about his God and the relationship he had with Him. Such is not accomplished overnight, as with Paul, there was considerable investment of time. “Spiritual transformation is a lifelong process of becoming more like Christ, reflecting more and more of his image in every aspect of our lives. It grows out of our souls affections and leads toward a life

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<sup>85</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 110.

<sup>86</sup> Addison, *Movements That Change the World*, 46.

<sup>87</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 866.

inclined in his direction resolved to embody words, emotions, and actions that have been transformed by the grace of God.”<sup>88</sup>

### Survey Design

It is important to first establish a baseline from which to think about encouraging spiritual formation as an emphasis in Greater Europe Mission. As such, the desire is to capture a current, static picture of spiritual formation disciplines practiced by GEM missionaries. The precise instrument is researcher-designed and it is comprised of various disciplines flowing from prayer, the Word, and reflection and described fully in the chapter on project design. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*,<sup>89</sup> *The Celebration of Discipline*,<sup>90</sup> *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*,<sup>91</sup> and *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*<sup>92</sup> served as the resources for selecting the disciplines for the survey and designing the questions. Some effort has been spent in seeking questionnaires or surveys that already exist as well. Frequency and time spent with particular practices are also a part of the instrument along with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale in order to correlate affective experience or well-being with the practice of the spiritual disciplines. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale authored by Ellison and Paloutzian<sup>93</sup> was chosen due to its proven record and extensive use in many settings. Further, questions were added to measure perceived

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<sup>88</sup> Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Disciple: Ten Traits of a Vital Christian*, 73.

<sup>89</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988).

<sup>90</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*.

<sup>91</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991).

<sup>92</sup> Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*.

<sup>93</sup> Craig W. Ellison, “Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization and Measurement,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11, no. 4 (1983): 330-340; see also Fee and Ingram.

ministry effectiveness, not just satisfaction. These were formulated and Dr. Bryan Auday was consulted concerning the survey instrument.

### **Assumptions, Anticipated Outcomes, and Limitations**

As this project is approached there are some underlying assumptions. As argued to this point, there is a subconscious and latent non-supernaturalism among most Evangelicals and as a result among missionaries. By that it is not meant that they don't believe in the supernatural, but rather due to knowledge largely being limited to reason, are consciously unaware of the ways the supernatural (God) would want to engage them. This is not an issue of expecting miracles (although they should be welcomed) or even wanting them per se but of learning to live life supernaturally from the resources of the Kingdom and growing in the awareness to do so. It appears that spiritual formation can overcome the effects of the Enlightenment induced non-supernaturalism by restoring religious knowledge gained from conversationally walking with Christ as Willard has described.<sup>94</sup> This is one of the reasons that systematic practice of spiritual disciplines is so important. Due to this writer's experience over the last number of years, transformation appears to just occur and multiple graces simply emerge that could not be accounted for except for a greater Spirit-induced eye to the Kingdom with regard to both its ways and its fruit. At another level, it would be fantastic to see contagious Kingdom expansion occur due to the growth induced through the practice of the spiritual disciplines by the missionaries. As mentioned earlier, there are some from among GEM's missionaries where it appears their passion to see the Kingdom expand is accompanied by a passionate spiritual life.

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<sup>94</sup> Willard, *Knowing Christ Today*, 23.

Another assumption made is that the vast majority of GEM personnel are well educated. While that is changing at this point in time, a large portion of our missionaries have advanced degrees, and almost all have college degrees. This adds weight to the previous assumption that there may be a latent subconscious non-supernaturalism among them. This would be reflected in Bible reading primarily focused on gaining knowledge rather than learning of God<sup>95</sup> and a prayer life limited to requests rather than expanded by conversation,<sup>96</sup> self-disclosure and listening.<sup>97</sup>

A third assumption is that they already have a regular practice of some spiritual disciplines. The information and surveys delineated in this paper bear witness to this, yet as that same information indicates, those practices may not be systematic or disciplined and could possibly use some coaching or training. For this author, proactively exploring the area of spiritual formation over the past 17 or so years has proven to be immensely encouraging and is continuing to be so through this current D. Min. program.

The fourth and last assumption is that those to be surveyed are all men and women of God, who love Him and want to pursue a life that is pleasing to Him. They are all people who have experienced regeneration through a personal faith in Jesus Christ and have had a number of life experiences with Him to date.

### Anticipated Outcomes

First, a baseline measure of practice concerning the spiritual disciplines among the missionaries of Greater Europe Mission is sought. What is the state of spiritual formation

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<sup>95</sup> John 5:39

<sup>96</sup> Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, November, 1999).

<sup>97</sup> Jan Johnson, *When the Soul Listens: Finding Rest and Direction in Contemplative Prayer* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1999).

among our missionaries? Is it strong? Weak? Are there holes where people lack knowledge and understanding? Are there issues necessary to face and address or are there some things necessary to express thanks for that are already possessed?

Secondly, what are the correlations that can be made with regard to the practice of the spiritual disciplines as currently applied by GEM's missionaries? Are there correlations with life and ministry satisfaction as well as effectiveness? Is there a growing attachment of the affections to God and His purposes? If there does not appear to be a correlation are there instances of individuals where these are related and therefore beg further study? Are there people who already evidence the correlation between systematic application of the disciplines, well-being (satisfaction), and effectiveness? Were the hypotheses born out, that a correlation would exist between spiritual formation practices, well-being, effectiveness and retention?

Third, are there surprises in the data, connections that were not anticipated? Are there things being suggested that lead to other hypotheses or conclusions? Are there insights to be gained regarding age trends or issues that may impact certain regions in GEM?

Lastly, are there any next steps indicated from the research? Are there implications for well-being, ministry and retention that need to be faced and addressed corporately? What about regionally? Are there things that could be done in pre-field preparation and recruiting or are there issues to address on the field? What are the implications for future missionaries with Greater Europe Mission?

In brief then, this study will show (1) the state of existing spiritual formation practices among GEM missionary personnel; (2) the relationship between the systematic practice of spiritual disciplines and spiritual well-being; (3) whether there is a set of spiritual



disciplines that significantly impact well-being of the missionary; (4) the implications of these practices on retention of the missionary on the field; and (5) whether there are any implications with regard to perceived ministry effectiveness. Depending on the results, this study could have tremendous ramifications for the selection and preparation of missionaries before deployment to the field and for assisting them in their own spiritual formation while on the field. Hopefully this will help GEM in fostering an environment for contagious Kingdom expansion.

### Limitations

Finally, it is necessary to address a limitation. This study is correlational and cannot determine cause and effect relationships. It can only determine if a relationship exists between the items considered. Moreover, spiritual formation practices are non-instrumental, that is they operate from the principle of “indirection”<sup>98</sup> and have no direct causal relationship to events or circumstance. They just avail a person to the workings of God’s grace in their heart for transformation that becomes evident in life circumstance.

### Conclusion

The question under investigation in this proposed study was delineated regarding the issues to which correlation is sought with the spiritual disciplines among Greater Europe Mission field personnel. The influences impacting the practice of spiritual formation among Evangelicals have been delineated, indicating that they follow the general worldview that has its basis in Enlightenment. This has produced an emphasis on the rational and the cognitive rather than other sources of knowledge. Further, direct interaction with God and the supernatural apart from the mind has been sidelined as a

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<sup>98</sup> Richard J. Foster and Kathryn A. Helmers, *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2008), 15, 16, 155.

result. This has affected the relevance of Christianity in North America and has shaped the Evangelicalism that is there as well as the practice of the spiritual disciplines. Spiritual formation has not been an emphasis (although it is a growing movement today) for much of Evangelicalism's history and that has implications for the formation of the spiritual lives of the missionaries that come from U.S. and Canada. This was all substantiated with survey evidence. Thus fostering in this writer the desire for investigating the state of spiritual formation and the use of the disciplines among GEM's missionaries. A discussion of the anticipated survey instrument ensued. The assumptions, outcomes, and limitations of the research were described as well.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION CONSISTENT WITH KINGDOM EXPANSION**

#### **Introduction**

The contemporary cultural context in North America fosters a worldview that discounts the supernatural as indicated in the previous chapter. Of course this has had its influence on the spiritual formation practices of the contemporary church as well as what it means to interact with the God who is there. As indicated, this impacts not only the spiritual growth and expectations of the believers, but also the missionaries. Whether or not a person believes in Christ, what that person expects out of their relationship with God in reality has been impacted by the dominant culture.<sup>1</sup> As such, full engagement with God and understanding how He interacts with His people appears to be substantially different than the Scriptures reflect. This of course begs the question, what kind of relationship is possible with God? What sort of spiritual life practices countermand the impact of contemporary culture and foster interaction with God in such a way that would lead to contagious expansion of the Kingdom?

Here it is intended to explore a theology and philosophy of Spiritual Formation that examines the biblical foundations, while giving attention to worldview and seeking insight from both Testaments, including the practice of Jesus and the perspective of the Apostles. The Scripture and church history clearly see the goal of spiritual formation as conformity to the image of Jesus Christ, which has considerable implications for the expansion of the Kingdom. As such, systematic theology and church history will inform the discussion, as will recent developments in the field of psychology. The overall goal

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 12:2

focuses on a development of spiritual formation that has a transforming influence on the person toward the *missio Dei*,<sup>2</sup> much like Christ. Richard Foster refers to this as “*amor mundi*, our being quickened to a divine but painful compassion for the world.”<sup>3</sup> As with Christ, this cultivation of love for the world flows from uniting with God’s heart by enjoying His love. So the end of spiritual formation is Christlike character that reflects a life like Christ would live today<sup>4</sup> with the same redemptive passion toward our fellow man.

### Contemporary State of Spiritual Formation

The influence of the Enlightenment and Modernism has served to derail the central focus of spiritual formation. Dallas Willard says in *The Divine Conspiracy* that “More than any other single thing, in any case, the practical irrelevance of actual obedience to Christ accounts for the weakened effect of Christianity in the world today...”<sup>5</sup> Willard

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<sup>2</sup> David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 390-393. “Mission was first understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It was put into the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine of *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit was expanded to include yet another “movement”: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.” While this term may have been weakened through its limitation in academia to the “whole historical process, not to any specific work of the church...” Wright maintains that, “...the expression can be retained as expressing a major and vital biblical truth (as the title *The Mission of God* is intended to reaffirm). The God revealed in the Scripture is personal, purposeful and goal oriented. The opening account of creation portrays God working toward a goal, completing it with satisfaction and resting, content with the result. And from the great promise of God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 we know this God to be totally, covenantally and eternally committed to the mission of blessing the nations through the agency of the people of Abraham...such that Paul can describe this text as the gospel in advance (Gal 3:8).” C. J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 62-63.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Foster, “Spiritual Formation Agenda,” *Christianity Today* 53, no. 1 (2009): 28-33. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rlh&AN=36031330&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>4</sup> Dallas Willard, “What Makes Spirituality Christian? Dallas Willard Thinks It Is As Important to Live the Truth As It Is to Believe It,” *Christianity Today* (1995): 16-17, and Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, April, 1998), 283.

<sup>5</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, xv.

focuses on “obedience to Christ” which has tremendous implications for life, especially as one looks at the Sermon on the Mount or another passage like Matthew 23:12-26, where Jesus clearly indicates what must be changed, pointing to the interior heart motivations so that the exterior behavior flows from that transformation. Elsewhere Willard states, “The idea that you can trust Christ and not intend to obey him is an illusion generated by the prevalence of an unbelieving ‘Christian Culture.’”<sup>6</sup> David Kinnaman in his book titled *unChristian*, documents this general lack of obedience as he examines why younger generations have an unfavorable view of Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Statements such as these indicate (1) the culture does not value Christ, except for what benefits them; (2) they don’t honor Christ with His rightful worth as Lord of the universe (as such misunderstand Him); and (3) they see Jesus as impotent for today. Believing in Christ is less about formation and transformation than it is about hedging bets for their future afterlife. Granted this is a mono-continental look at born-again Christianity, yet the European context is not much different in its evangelical Christianity, which only has a very small percentage of the population.<sup>8</sup> Thus the

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<sup>6</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, April, 2002), 88.

<sup>7</sup> The book looks at what the younger generations observe in Christians and the inconsistency both between word and deed as well as Jesus’ teaching and His followers’ attitudes. Based on the research for the book and after examining Galatians 5:13-15, Kinnaman makes this statement, “The unchristian faith – hypocritical, judgmental, and full of empty moral striving – is what Paul warned us about! And it is a part of the reason we are known as hypocrites.” David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity—And Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 52.

<sup>8</sup> In the European Believers Report, Ruth Robinson has the percentage of European evangelical believers at 1.1%. Ruth Robinson, *European Believers Report 2007 revised* (Web Distribution: Ruth Robinson, August 25, 2007), <http://ambrief.wordpress.com/european-believers-report-2007/> (accessed December 10, 2009), 1.

hypocrisy that Kinnaman speaks about is clearly reflected in the sentiments of Willard and visible in society.

Barna, in research posted on the Internet, states: "...many churchgoers and clergy struggle to articulate a basic understanding of spiritual maturity. People aspire to be spiritually mature, but they do not know what it means. Pastors want to guide others on the path to spiritual wholeness, but they are often not clearly defining the goals or the outcomes of that process."<sup>9</sup> Concerning the population as a whole, the study says:

One of the widely embraced notions about spiritual health is that it means "trying hard to follow the rules described in the Bible" – 81% of self-identified Christians endorsed this statement, and a majority agreed strongly (53%). Even among those individuals defined by their belief that salvation is not earned through "good works," four out of five born again Christians concurred that spiritual maturity is "trying hard to follow the rules."<sup>10</sup>

Yet according to Kinnaman, all that effort to follow the rules only results in hypocrisy that the younger generations see as reasons not to become Christians. This indicates that spiritual formation for Evangelicals has been primarily focused on the gospel of sin management rather than living Kingdom life today.<sup>11</sup> In fact, for those who do desire to grow spiritually and express Kingdom life, there are too few experienced and mature believers to help point in the right direction.

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<sup>9</sup> "Many Churchgoers and Faith Leaders Struggle to Define Spiritual Maturity," *Barna Group, Ltd. Website* (Perspectives in defining spiritual maturity from both clergy and laity among protestants.) (Barna Group and Living on the Edge, May 11, 2009), <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/264-many-churchgoers-and-faith-leaders-struggle-to-define-spiritual-maturity> (accessed October 27, 2009), 1.

<sup>10</sup> "Many Churchgoers and Faith Leaders Struggle to Define Spiritual Maturity," 1.

<sup>11</sup> Willard speaks of two gospels of sin management. One that represents the right, which focuses on forgiveness, but has no message for living today; and one on the left which focuses on eliminating social evils with no apparent connection to the biblical understanding of God. Both of these avoid obedience to Christ. Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 35-59.

Indeed, for pastors and church leaders, defining spiritual maturity consistently appears near impossible. The Barna Group study indicates that pastors define maturity related more to activities rather than attitudes and no survey response captured even 20% of agreement as to its measure.<sup>12</sup> Pastors also struggled to communicate with unanimity common Bible passages that provide good indications of what spiritual maturity consists.<sup>13</sup>

Consequently, spiritual formation and its result, spiritual maturity, need serious reflection and definition in the Christian West. The dynamic of the first century church and the contagion of the Christlike life appear to be abysmally absent today as the preceding statistics indicate and the concern for the shrinking church grows.<sup>14</sup>

### **Developing the Biblical Basis for Christian Spiritual Formation**

Developing the foundation for Christian Spiritual Formation necessitates an understanding of the biblical worldview, Christian Theology and its history. Anchoring spiritual formation in this way, distinguishes it as uniquely Christian and from all other

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<sup>12</sup> “Many Churchgoers and Faith Leaders Struggle to Define Spiritual Maturity,” *Barna Group, Ltd. Website*, 2, “pastors often favor activities over perspectives in their definitions of spiritual maturity. Their metrics for people’s spirituality include the practice of spiritual disciplines (19%), involvement in church activities (15%), witnessing to others (15%), having a relationship with Jesus (14%), having concern for others (14%), applying the Bible to life (12%), being willing to grow spiritually (12%), and having knowledge of Scripture (9%).”

<sup>13</sup> “Many Churchgoers and Faith Leaders Struggle to Define Spiritual Maturity,” *Barna Group, Ltd. Website*, 3, “As for verse-specific responses (mentioned by just one-fifth of pastors), the most common passages included: Galatians 5, John 3:16, Ephesians 4, Matthew 28, and Romans 12:1-2. Just 2% of pastors specifically identified the Galatians 5 passage relating to the “fruits of the Spirit,” which includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control.”

<sup>14</sup> “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic February 2008,” 20. “According to the Landscape Survey, more than one-in-six American adults (16.1%) are not currently affiliated with any particular religious group. Through the 1980s, the GSS consistently found that between 5% and 8% of the public was not affiliated with any particular religion. By 2006, however, the GSS showed that 16% of U.S. adults reported no religious affiliation.”

competing spiritualities.<sup>15</sup> An examination of significant passages, some biblical personalities and their practices clarifies the focus, content, and habits necessary to an intimate walk with Christ. Of course that intimate relationship with Jesus flows from the foundation of the ongoing experienced loving presence of God.

### The Biblical Worldview

Competing spiritualities invading various Christian traditions shows the need to build the framework for spiritual formation solidly within a biblical worldview.<sup>16</sup> Genesis starts off with a great assumption: the existence of a transcendent God who is not bound by the physical universe, is sovereign over it and chooses to be intimately involved in it.<sup>17</sup> God moves to reveal Himself in the act of creation. God desires to be

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<sup>15</sup> People are mixing spiritualities and are not recognizing the traditional boundaries of faith. "Elements of Eastern faiths and New Age thinking have been widely adopted by 65% of U.S. adults, including many who call themselves Protestants and Catholics, according to a survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life released Wednesday." The same *USAToday* Article quotes Albert Mohler of Southern Baptist Seminary as saying, "This is a failure of the pulpit as much as of the pew to be clear about what is and is not compatible with Christianity and belief in salvation only through Christ." Cathy Lynn Grossman, "More U.S. Christians Mix in 'Eastern,' New Age Beliefs," *USA Today* (2009). [http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2009-12-10-1Amixingbeliefs10\\_CV\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2009-12-10-1Amixingbeliefs10_CV_N.htm) (accessed December 11, 2009). See also Luis Lugo, "Eastern, New Age Beliefs Widespread Many Americans Mix Multiple Faiths," *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, directed by Andrew Kohut (Web: Pew Research Center, December 9, 2009), <http://pewforum.org/newassets/images/reports/multiplefaiths/multiplefaiths.pdf> (accessed December 11, 2009), and the broader study that reflects similar things. All of this reflects departure from a Biblical or Christian worldview and has implications for how we transfer our faith to future generations.

<sup>16</sup> "A worldview is a way of describing the universe and life within it, both in terms of what is and what ought to be. A given worldview is a set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not (either in actuality, or in principle), what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors, and relationships are desirable or undesirable. A worldview defines what can be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done. In addition to defining what goals can be sought in life, a worldview defines what goals should be pursued. Worldviews include assumptions that may be unproven, and even unprovable, but these assumptions are superordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological foundations for other beliefs within a belief system." Mark E Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews," *Review of General Psychology* 8, no. 1 (2004): doi:10.1037/1089-2680.8.1.3. <http://www.universityinstitute.in/images/Psychology.pdf> (accessed December 11, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." reflects this theological position and implies a number of things: (1) If nothing existed, God would still exist; (2) God desired to give something and more than likely that is Himself (self-revelation, ultimately Jesus); (3) His intentions are good toward His creation (something we see throughout the rest of Scripture).



known and that is why He created<sup>18</sup> — thus creation is a *missional* act. This then is the first component of a biblical worldview. As it impacts spiritual formation, Willard writes:

Jesus' good news about the kingdom can be an effective guide for our lives only if we share his view of the world in which we live. To his eyes this is a God-bathed world and God-permeated world. It is a world filled with a glorious reality, where every component is within the range of God's direct knowledge and control—though he obviously permits some of it, for good reasons, to be for a while otherwise than as he wishes. It is a world that is inconceivably beautiful and good because of God and because God is always in it.<sup>19</sup>

Jesus, therefore, was not proclaiming something new, but articulating a reality that flows from the moment of creation: God reigns and His Kingdom both permeates and transcends this universe.<sup>20</sup> God is everywhere present; His Kingdom is always and eternally unavoidable.

The second major component touches on man as a creation of God. The Genesis account states that man was created by a plural<sup>21</sup> Godhead, in that God's image and

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<sup>18</sup> Duet 4:29, "Foundational meaning (seek...find). In about 35 passages שׁוּר forms a word pair with שׁוּר (pi., seek) and clearly connotes to find (the result of a search). In addition to searches for animals (1 Sam 10:2; Jer 2:24), people (Gen 37:15; Josh 2:22; Song of Songs 3:1), and records (Ezra 2:62; Neh 7:64; Esth 2:23), this word pair refers to "seeking . . . finding" with theological overtones. These two vbs. signify Yahweh's availability to those who seek after him (Deut 4:29; 2 Chron 15:4, 15; Jer 29:13; cf. Isa 55:6; 65:1; Ps 32:5 [6], which lay emphasis on the divine initiative in this regard) and describe the vain search for Israel's guilt after the remnant survives divine judgment (because they are forgiven, Jer 50:20)." Emphasis mine. Entry for שׁוּר, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Electronic text hypertexted and prepared by OakTree Software, Inc., Version 1.1 ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 61.

<sup>20</sup> Mark 1:15, "'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'"

<sup>21</sup> The purpose of this paper is not an exegesis of Genesis 1, yet this author believes that the Trinity is here in the grammar of the first chapter of the Bible indicating a plural Godhead "us, our" language, the plural of the word for God, 'elohim, throughout. Theologians differ on this as some take the plural form to be a plural of majesty or "majestic potentialities" Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 105. Also see Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology, Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House, 1986), 328-29, for the opposing view.

likeness, thus granting man the capacity to relate to God and others. This has substantial implications for developments and emphases shown in the rest of Scripture and reflected in Jesus' teachings.<sup>22</sup> God creating man in His image and likeness also indicates the end for which man was created and that being to reflect the character, will, and ways of God. This also implies that man needs a referent, or orientation point, outside of himself in order to function in life.<sup>23</sup> Imitation also becomes a key thought and is developed in the New Testament.<sup>24</sup> God gave man purpose and significance by commanding him to multiply and to rule over creation. In the command to multiply God placed the emphasis on relationship as the result would be other people with whom man could relate and through whom God could display His image.

One other point that touches spiritual formation needs to be made: God is personal. It should be evident from the forgoing; yet God thought of His creation and their needs, which is why a rich environment of beauty, variety, food, and animals were made. God blessed man after He made him, and the Bible indicates that God made man in a personal way, animated him by a loving gesture that reflects the idea of a kiss and he became "soul."<sup>25</sup> Intimacy with God is part of His plan. Here in plain sight one sees

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<sup>22</sup> These implications are not limited to but summed up by Jesus in Matthew 22:37-40 and concentrate on man's relational capacities toward his Creator and his fellow creatures.

<sup>23</sup> Francis Schaeffer argues for the sufficiency of the infinite-personal God as the only plausible referent point for man. Although apart from God as this reference point man attempts to seek meaning elsewhere. Schaeffer, F. A., *Escape From Reason: A Penetrating Analysis of Modern Thought*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974), 87, 88, 90.

<sup>24</sup> Eph 5:1, "...be imitators of God..."

<sup>25</sup> Gen 2:7, "the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and *breathed* into his *nostrils* the breath of life, and the man became a living being." Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation gives a more accurate contemporary picture, but the idea of closeness and intimacy are implicit in the act. God could have animated man in another way, why this one? "Man's first breath was the very breath of life which God breathed out; intimacy of created mode is suggested that is consonant with the nature of man who, though an earthling, stands in image-relationship to God (cf. 1:27)" Donald, Guthrie, J. A. Motyer and

God's own love provides the basis for His interaction with man — never does this basis change, and it is the reason for sending Jesus. God is passionate.

The next component of the biblical worldview leaves a strong hidden echo in the back of man's mind and heart: something has gone radically wrong. Man aims for ideals that he can neither see nor achieve, and he longs to overcome the experience of this life in which he feels struggle and pain so intensely. In Christian Theology, this is called the fall of man. Man disobeyed His creator.<sup>26</sup> The change is not with God, but with the creature who now runs and hides due to shame.<sup>27</sup> Chaos entered relationships and the universe.<sup>28</sup>

Three aspects of the fall need to be addressed and they relate to the process and the beliefs man assumed before he acted. The first is that man believed God lied.<sup>29</sup> The second is that man refused to believe/trust the goodness of God.<sup>30</sup> The third relates to arrogance of man in choosing to be like God and transcend<sup>31</sup> his own design (nature) not recognizing he was already like God. Evidence of not believing the goodness of God

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Francis Davidson, *The New Bible Commentary, Revised* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975). The **NET Bible** adds this note: “**tn** The Hebrew word נְשָׁמָה (*néshamah*, “breath”) is used for God and for the life imparted to humans, not animals (see T. C. Mitchell, “The Old Testament Usage of *Néshama*,” *VT* 11 [1961]: 177-87). Its usage in the Bible conveys more than a breathing living organism (נֶפֶשׁ *nefesh khayyah*). Whatever is given this breath of life becomes animated with the life from God, has spiritual understanding (Job 32:8), and has a functioning conscience (Prov 20:27).” *The NET Bible, First Edition*. version 3.2 ed. By Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C., 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Gen 2:16-17 cf. 3:1-7

<sup>27</sup> Gen 3:8

<sup>28</sup> Rom 8:19-22

<sup>29</sup> Gen 3:4, Satan challenges the truth of God.

<sup>30</sup> Gen 3:5, In the argument Satan challenges the goodness of God based on the lie that God is keeping the best from man.

<sup>31</sup> Gen 3:6, Man chose to be like God contrary to his design as an image bearer in the likeness of God already.

after the fall as well as not being able to trust God is seen in the hiding of the first couple.<sup>32</sup> All three are radical reshaping-relationship events.<sup>33</sup> All are addressed in man's response to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the process of ongoing spiritual formation. Genesis 2 and 3 define life as relational connection and congruence with the true God and the lack of this as death.<sup>34</sup>

It is necessary to touch on the use of the Hebrew verb *יָדָה* (*yāda'*) and the implications for it in spiritual formation. This verb has a strong relational and experiential component to it with respect to knowledge. It speaks to the emotional impact of an experience/event as it drives home learning and the individual interiorizes that learning and translates it into behavior.<sup>35</sup> While not addressing the use of the Hebrew verb *יָדָה*, Koltko-Rivera does speak to the ability of worldview to be reshaped and modified through ongoing life experiences.<sup>36</sup> Since God can be the object as well as the subject of this verb it means He can be experienced in life and by the human heart. The point being made in the examination of this verb concerns how strong emotionally

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<sup>32</sup> Gen 3:8

<sup>33</sup> Jer 17:9-10 speaks to the depth of the fall in the heart of man and the fact man is unable to discern his own heart. For that, man needs God. The fall has radical implications even for man understanding himself because his heart is deceitful. It is the heart (interior) of man that must be re-formed in spiritual formation.

<sup>34</sup> Gen 2:17, 3:3

<sup>35</sup> "General usage. The meanings of *יָדָה* are difficult to relate to one another. They range from sensory perception to intellectual process to practical skill to careful attention to close relationship to physical intimacy.... In the broadest sense, *יָדָה* means to take various aspects of the world of one's experience into the self, including the resultant relationship with that which is known. The fundamentally relational character of knowing (over against a narrow intellectual sense) can be discerned, not least in that both God and human beings can be subject and object of the vb." VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, entry for *יָדָה*.

<sup>36</sup> "The self emits behavior; behavior results in experience; experience molds the self (and one's worldview, an aspect of the self). (It should be noted that "behavior" includes self-reports of "unobservables" such as affect and cognition.)" Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews," 36.

oriented events reshape or construct (thus form) the human interior and how reality is perceived. God intended Himself to be experienced by His creation giving hope for the blessing of reshaping. Koltko-Rivera shows that worldview is open and adaptive in this way, thus allowing for transformation of the individual and affirming the implications from the verb, *ʔṭ* (*yāda'*), supporting that relating to God has transformative import.

The fourth aspect of the biblical worldview includes a redeeming God as expressed in Jesus Christ. God has a solution for man's problem that can address his subliminal yearning for a better world. God is in pursuit of blessing man and has been since before creation,<sup>37</sup> but not out of context nor impersonally. God has a face, an identity, and man must recognize Him in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>38</sup> Man is not free to make God in his own image.<sup>39</sup> What is left for man is to respond to the gracious work of God through Jesus Christ. In doing so man makes some fundamental changes in his thinking about God: (1) to come to Christ for salvation, man must believe God is speaking the truth upon which he can rely; (2) God has to be perceived as good and seeking the benefit of the other; (3) in submission man must receive God's gift and reign in his life to live as God designed and intended for His blessing<sup>40</sup> to be enjoyed. Each of these addresses the issues of the fall and each have to be continually addressed in the formation process as

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<sup>37</sup> Eph 1

<sup>38</sup> John 1:1,14-18; 8:58; 14:6; Rom 3:21-26, 5:6-11; Eph 2:8-9 all of these verses show salvation as a gift from God through Jesus Christ pointing to the radical goodness of God.

<sup>39</sup> John 14:6

<sup>40</sup> Blessing has not been discussed yet, but two aspects are central. Based on Hebrews 11:6 (actually all of Hebrews 11) God Himself is the blessing. Secondly, intimacy with God works out in a blessing of intimacy with others, shared emotional space where emotionally experienced life is met with emotionally embracing empathy.

growth occurs. Man is justified by Christ's death as a free gift and is saved by Christ's ongoing life.<sup>41</sup>

The fifth aspect of the Christian worldview is eschatological hope or the fulfillment of God's purposes in redemption. Christianity moves forward and into a future planned and filled with God and His saints. The purposes of God in Genesis 1 are realized and man is free from the effects of the fall and the struggles of this life and he is restored to full intimacy and communion with God and others:

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.<sup>42</sup>

Along with the future aspect Christians live in hope of transformation daily<sup>43</sup> and resurrection. The world is God-bathed and He graciously works to form the believer by the active presence of the Holy Spirit toward Christlikeness throughout his life.<sup>44</sup>

These aspects of the biblical worldview are sufficient to ground the philosophy and theology of spiritual formation solidly in the Christian tradition. The primary desire here is to set spiritual formation in a biblically Christian framework. This included God's

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<sup>41</sup> Rom 5:10; Gal 2:20; Phil 3:1-16

<sup>42</sup> Rev 22:1-5 cf. Gen 1:26-28

<sup>43</sup> Rom 5:2

<sup>44</sup> Rom 5:2; 8:14, 8:28-30; 2 Cor 3:18; Gal 2:20, 5:22-23 and let's not forget the Spirit of God moving over the water waiting on the word of God so the Spirit could form and fill the earth in accordance with that word (Genesis 1:2). This could be an archetype for God's way straightening out the chaos of man's deceitful heart.

reign (Kingdom) and His missional move in creation to extend the blessing of Himself to man. The Scriptures also offer man a reasonable explanation of the fall, which conforms with man's innate sense of something really wrong with himself, relationships and the world, even though he may deny his own culpability.<sup>45</sup> Further the Christian worldview returns focus to the goodness of God in His supply of redemption in Jesus Christ (God Himself), through whom believers have the hope of resurrection and eternal life both in this life and the life to come.<sup>46</sup> In fact, one could say that God's intention in creating was to give Himself to us to enjoy, something He actually did physically in the incarnation.

### Trinity as the Basis for Spiritual Formation

In the brief treatment of the biblical worldview as context for spiritual formation, the three persons of the Godhead were mentioned: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The doctrine will not be repeated here. However, the Trinity<sup>47</sup> (Tri-unity) of the Godhead stands as unique to Christianity, supplies a substantial basis for the concept of relationships, as relationships are intrinsic to God. He is an eternally existing community

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<sup>45</sup> Rom 1:18-21

<sup>46</sup> John 17:3, The verb is present tense indicating eternal life begins at the point of conversion to Christ. Also here γινώσκω echoes γινώσκω: “27.18 γινώσκω: to learn to know a person through direct *personal experience, implying a continuity of relationship* — ‘to know, to become acquainted with, to be familiar with.’ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν ‘then we are sure that we know him’ 1Jn 2:3; ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν ‘for people to know you, the only true God’ Jn 17:3. In translating γινώσκω in Jn 17:3, it is important to avoid an expression which will mean merely ‘to learn about.’ Here the emphasis must be on the interpersonal relationship which is *experienced*.” (emphasis, mine.) *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (Landkarten zur Bible, prepared by Karl Elliger, revised by Siegfried Mittmann. Designed by Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart and Kartographisches Institut Helmut Fuchs Leonberg. Copyright ©1963, 1978, 1990 by Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. Used by permission), ed. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1989).

<sup>47</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), is an excellent review of the doctrine in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

and it is into that community the Christian is invited.<sup>48</sup> The Trinity also serves as an apologetic for Christianity (and its superiority among world religions) as no man would imagine the idea; the concept had to be revealed and that speaks to the heart of a God who desires to be known. There is beauty and glory in relationships that is inviting to others when the relational dynamic is good. Theologians utilize the term *perichōresis*<sup>49</sup> to reflect the perfection and beauty of the interrelationships of the Trinity. Edith Humphrey writes,

For Jesus' words, along with the Greek Fathers' term, imply a complete "movement around and into," plus an utter "abiding within" – an indescribable ecstasy and intimacy. The later Latin Fathers, indeed had to use two different words to describe the metaphor in completeness, *circumincessio*, which means "to proceed around and through" and *circuminsessio*, which means "to settle around and within." To think further upon the divine concourse is to evoke a spiritual blush, indeed, to tread on blasphemy; our search for a dim analogy in human experience will lead us far beyond the reserve of the dance.

God's being, then, goes beyond our imagination. The Son and Spirit "go out" from the Father eternally, even as each Person goes out to and indwells the Others, in abandon and intimacy.<sup>50</sup>

Chan speaks of 3 implications of Trinity for spirituality: (1) "[S]alvation is essential union with God;" (2) "[S]piritual life is essentially relational without ceasing to be particular;" and (3) "The perichoresis of the Trinity characterized by the distinct persons-in-relation offers a pattern for human relationship. It also provides a basis for

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<sup>48</sup> John 17:20-26

<sup>49</sup> περιχωρεσις, Edith Humphrey differs with Eugene Peterson as to the meaning of this word. Both agree that the full and explicit concept as it applies to Trinity was first developed by John of Damascus and discussed in Chapter 14 of his discourses of *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*. However, Mrs. Humphrey insists that it is spelled with the letter omega rather than omicron and has a deeper meaning than "dance." Please see Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, February, 2005), 44-45, and Edith Humphrey, *Ecstasy and Intimacy: When the Holy Spirit Meets the Human Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2006), 92.

<sup>50</sup> Humphrey, *Ecstasy and Intimacy*, 93.



the Christian's participation in the Trinitarian life."<sup>51</sup> Concerning these implications, Humphrey states:

Holy is as holy does. And so, God displays his inner life as he deals with us! The ecstasy and intimacy that God hides within the mystery of the Trinity spill over into his dealings with creation, and especially with humanity. God is ecstatic – he stands outside of himself, going out to us in the Son, even to the extreme point of humility and death. He is also intimate, dwelling among us in the Spirit, in a manner that is nearer than our own breath.<sup>52</sup>

So Trinity has tremendous influence on the approach to spiritual formation and strongly hints not only at the necessity for human community but that the pursuit of God naturally results in community with others. As such Trinity even more substantiates the reason Jesus summarized the Law as He did in Matthew 22:37-40. Trinity along with Jesus' summary of the Law may also provide the basis for the Great Commission since the best way to love God and neighbor is to introduce God to neighbor.

#### Purpose and Definition of Spiritual Formation

Now that spiritual formation has been clearly set in a biblical and Trinitarian Christian context, what is the purpose or end? The Bible speaks clearly to this as Romans 8:28 states that those who are called according to God's purpose, "He also predestined to become *conformed to the image of His Son*" and Paul in Galatians reports, "I am again in labor until *Christ* is formed in you." Elsewhere Paul says, "be imitators of *God*" or "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of *Christ*" or "You also became imitators of us and of the *Lord*" (emphasis mine).<sup>53</sup> It appears quite plain that the purpose of spiritual formation is for the believer to become like Christ. Willard

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<sup>51</sup> Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 52-53.

<sup>52</sup> *Ecstasy and Intimacy*, 93.

<sup>53</sup> Gal 4:19; Eph 5:1; 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6

states, “Another important way of putting this is to say that I am learning from Jesus to live *my* life as he would live my life if he were I.”<sup>54</sup> According to Chan the “Christian life is an intentional process aimed at a goal that is variously called union with God (Catholic), deification (Orthodox) and glorification (Protestant).”<sup>55</sup> Each of these ideas have at the core the Spirit so permeating (as with the *perichōresis* of the Trinity) the believer that the Christlike life is the result, yet most recognize that goal won’t be fully realized in this life. So the purpose of spiritual formation is that Christ is formed in the believer, which includes the heart of Christ to extend the Kingdom of God.<sup>56</sup>

Others have defined spiritual formation variously, but as some definitions are examined, some important components are discerned. Eugene Peterson defines it this way: “Spiritual formation is primarily what the Spirit does, forming the resurrection life of Christ in us.”<sup>57</sup> Richard Forster says, ““Spiritual formation” is the process of transforming the inner reality of the self (the inward being of the psalmist) in such a way that the overall life with God seen in the Bible naturally and freely comes to pass in us.”<sup>58</sup> Here Foster states the location of the transformation with greater clarity than Peterson, yet like Peterson, he fails to capture the missional aspect. Willard captures that missional concept more fully in his definition because of the inclusion of neighbor: “Spiritual formation in Christ is the process leading to that ideal end, and its result is

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<sup>54</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 283.

<sup>55</sup> Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 18.

<sup>56</sup> Matt 9:35; Luke 19:10; Mark 1:15

<sup>57</sup> Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, 237.

<sup>58</sup> Richard J. Foster and Kathryn A. Helmers, *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2008), 10.

love of God with all of the heart, soul, mind and strength, and of the neighbor as oneself.”<sup>59</sup> Mulholland, on the other hand, represents the missional aspect well in his definition but is less clear as to the locus of transformation and the agent: “Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others”<sup>60</sup> With Mulholland the outward reach for the other reflects the missional, and yes, inward motivation toward the other with and because of the love of God. For the purposes of this chapter, the definition will be expressed in this way: *Spiritual formation is the process of the Spirit conforming the heart (mind, will, emotions) to the image of Christ so that the love of God can be experienced, reciprocated and expressed for the sake of others.*<sup>61</sup> This definition captures the relationship to the Trinity, the locus of transformation, and the goal of Christlikeness, resulting in love of God, and a desire to carry that love to others, thus becoming contagious for the Kingdom.

### Spiritual Formation in the Bible

The Scriptures are full of interactions of God with His people and vice versa. One thing that is often neglected is how much God initiates interaction. For instance in the Bible, God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit are found communicating to someone approximately 1,400 times in a variety of ways and to a variety of people.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*, 31.

<sup>60</sup> M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 38-41.

<sup>61</sup> This definition is still in process and can be shortened in this way: *Spiritual formation is the process of the Spirit conforming the heart (mind, will, emotions) to the image of Christ so that the love of God can be reciprocated and expressed for the sake of others.* The word experienced was eliminated as it can be assumed in the word “reciprocated” as God must have acted first, which is consistent with the Bible (1 John 4:19).

<sup>62</sup> An informal search was made using Accordance 8.4.1 software on an NASB 1995 translation that yielded 1,407 hits in 1,371 verses. A quick review shows that in the Epistles much of the verses reflected citations from the Old Testament, but some also included speech for the contemporary audience through

God actively initiates to reveal His plans and His will to His people. In some instances He interacts with those who are outside His covenantal relationships.<sup>63</sup> Yet this sets the pattern of God interacting with all his creation and especially those in covenant relationship with Him.

Typically there are three main ways of interacting with God encouraged in Scripture: hearing the Word of God, meditation or reflection on God's Word,<sup>64</sup> and prayer. Hearing the word of God has already been mentioned, but more must be said. The intention of God giving His word is obedience by those who receive it. When that word is recorded and becomes Scripture, the expectation is for memory and application so that it will lead to life. As an example of this idea in Scripture:

Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he and Joshua son of Nun. When Moses had finished saying all these words to all Israel, he said, "Take to heart all these words to which I give witness today and urgently command your children to put them into practice, every single word of this Revelation. Yes. This is no small matter for you; it's your *life*. In keeping this word you'll have a good and long *life* in this land that you're crossing the Jordan to possess."<sup>65</sup>

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an apostle. Here is the search string used: "word of the Lord <OR> God said <OR> God spoke <OR> Lord said <OR> Lord spoke <OR> word of God came <OR> God commanded <OR> Lord commanded <OR> God speak <OR> Lord speak <OR> says the Lord <OR> Jesus said <OR> Jesus commanded <OR> Holy Spirit says <OR> Holy Spirit spoke <OR> Spirit says <OR> LORD answered."

<sup>63</sup> For example, Jonah and Nahum represented God to Nineveh; Daniel to Babylon and Obadiah to Edom, Henry Hampton Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook with the New International Version*, Kindle Edition for iPhone (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 5523.

<sup>64</sup> The focus here is on the Word of God, but Scripture itself allows for reflecting or meditation on creation, but that is always in *relationship* to God and growing deep in understanding Him, His will and ways. Examples of this are Psalm 8:3, 19:1-6.

<sup>65</sup> *The Message*, Deut 32:44-47, (emphasis mine). Life here means life in relationship to God as well as a richer experience of life for all in the community (blessing). This is only one such passage like this in Deuteronomy. There are others.

The intent of living out Scripture is an enhanced experience of life or capacity to receive and be a blessing to others. In fact the significance of God's word is seen in the description of the King's role:

when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests... and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes... so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom.<sup>66</sup>

Thus the idea of contemplation, meditation and reflection is implicit so that application results. More will be said later regarding obedience.

Meditate or other forms of the word, on the other hand, occurs only 23 times and yet that is only one expression to capture dwelling or reflecting upon the Scripture and the variety of expressions is too difficult to capture in full.<sup>67</sup> Those expressions include "treasured," "hidden in my heart," "not forgotten," etc. A cursory reading of Psalm 119 supplies a variety of expressions. There are a number of passages that not only recommend, but also encourage meditation on the Word of God.<sup>68</sup>

Prayer is widely practiced in the Bible and the word itself in various forms appears approximately 330 times, pointing to its importance as a discipline for the people of God.<sup>69</sup> Other words like intercession, supplication, petition, requests, etc., are used to express the concept of communication with God. Prayer is also spontaneous and planned

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<sup>66</sup> Deut 17:18 from the NASB 1995; the full text on this warrants reading, Deut 17:14-20.

<sup>67</sup> An informal search using the expression "medit\* <OR> treasured" in Accordance Bible Software version 8.4.1 on the NASB 1995 text. Other terms were explored so it became clear that a precise search for the concept of reflection on God's word would be difficult to generate so as to capture the idea throughout the Scripture.

<sup>68</sup> Josh 1:8; Ps 1:2; Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12

<sup>69</sup> An informal search using the expression "pra\* <NOT> prai\* <NOT> prac\* <NOT> prae\*" in Accordance Bible Software version 8.4.1 on the NASB 1995 text.

and derives from life's circumstance throughout Scripture and has many forms. Often it is a cry for help or an ecstatic shout of praise to God. The settings for prayer vary since they are offered in communal worship and the circumstances of everyday life. Prayer, however, is always a response to God's prior initiative. Eugene Peterson has this to say about God's initiative:

The Psalms are acts of obedience, answering the God who has addressed us. God's word precedes these words: these prayers don't seek God, they respond to the God who seeks us. These responses are often ones of surprise, for who expects God to come looking for us? And they are sometimes awkward, for in our religious striving we are usually looking for something quite other than the God who has come looking for us. God comes and speaks—his word catches us in sin, finds us in despair, invades us by grace. The Psalms are our answers. We don't like what God speaks to us, and we don't always understand it. Left to ourselves, we will pray to some god who speaks what we like hearing, or to the part of God that we manage to understand. But what is critical is that we speak to the God who speaks to us and to everything that he speaks to us, and in our speaking (which gathers up our listening and answering) mature in the great art of conversation with God that is prayer. The Psalms—all of which listen in order to answer—train us in the conversation.<sup>70</sup>

Peterson makes clear that prayer is never isolated or man initiated. The pattern of prayer found in the Scriptures and reflected in the Psalms affirms God's initiative, although humans largely look at prayer as flowing from their initiative. The other aspect of prayer includes the idea of conversation; it is a two-way street. Thus Peterson concludes as a pastor his primary role is to teach people to pray using the language of intimacy, which he refers to as Language I:

But this is my basic work: on the one hand to proclaim the word of God that is personal—God addressing us in love, inviting us into a life of trust in him; on the other hand to guide and encourage an answering word that is likewise personal—to speak in the first person to the second person, I to Thou, and avoid third person commentary as much as possible. This is my essential educational task: to develop and draw out into articulateness this personal word, to teach people to pray. Prayer is

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<sup>70</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *Answering God: The Psalms As Tools for Prayer* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 5.

Language I. It is not language about God or the faith; it is not language in the service of God and the faith; it is language to and with God in faith.<sup>71</sup>

The Psalms are replete with prayers that reflect the language of intimacy. Prayer reflects faith in the availability or rather the immediate presence of a personal God in this God-bathed world, implying that it is also a conversation, and one that God desires since it begins with His initiative.

So the hearing the Word of God, meditation or reflection upon the Word, and prayer are the reference points from which all other spiritual formation practices flow. The point is saturation with the will and ways of God in this fantastically awe inspiring world in which He has placed man to live so as to engage Him and others well while extending blessing.

#### *Spiritual Formation in the Old Testament*

There is much to consider here because the Old Testament is so rich with insights for spiritual formation. The Old Testament shows a God who is intimately involved in His creation and in pursuit of extending blessing.<sup>72</sup> He seeks out Adam and Eve to restore them to relationship with Him. He preserves the human race through Noah, calls Abram to be a blessing and through Him to extend blessing to all the families of the earth. When God calls Israel to nationhood through the Exodus, He does so that Israel would be a nation of priests and proclaim His name in all the earth.<sup>73</sup> In each of these cases, God initiated, acted, and through the experiences formed a people for His name. He gave them an identity and put them into an ongoing relationship with Himself. Similar

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<sup>71</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, "First Language," *Theology Today* 42, no. 2 (1985): 211-214.

<sup>72</sup> 28 times in the 50 chapters of Genesis, God is actually blessing someone.

<sup>73</sup> Exod 19:6, 9:16

things could be said about Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, Job, Nehemiah, Esther, and many others where they were formed more deeply in their relationship with God and each of these, while not perfect in character, they continued to understand their life in relationship to the personal God who is there and trust themselves to his loving care. They could see “Him who is unseen.”<sup>74</sup> They lived life from the sphere of His blessing, confident in His goodness.

With the exception of Moses, David and Daniel not much is known about the devotional life of those mentioned. Moses spent two 40-day periods of prayer and fasting with God and was regular in times with God at the tent of meeting.<sup>75</sup> Daniel was regular and disciplined in prayer, lifting his heart to heaven three times a day;<sup>76</sup> David wrote almost half the Psalms and was considered a man after God’s own heart<sup>77</sup> despite his failures — why? He was responsive to God. In both David and Daniel<sup>78</sup> vulnerability and transparency in their relationship with God is apparent.<sup>79</sup> Joseph because of his walk with God (albeit not specifically mentioned but seen in the expression, “the LORD was with Joseph” and the mindfulness he had of God in most situations) rose to the height of power with a humble and grateful heart to God toward those who wronged him.<sup>80</sup> Joseph

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<sup>74</sup> Heb 11:27

<sup>75</sup> Exod 24:18, 34:28, 34:34

<sup>76</sup> Dan 6:10

<sup>77</sup> 1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22

<sup>78</sup> Dan 9:20

<sup>79</sup> 2 Sam 12:13-14

<sup>80</sup> Gen 39:2, 21; 41:16, 51-52, 50:19-21



demonstrates the uncanny knack of seeing all of life's circumstances under the loving providence of God despite the horrific trials that confronted him.

So with regard to the people of the Old Testament it is not easy to scrutinize their devotional lives. Those who were in relationship with God were formed by the events and they understood those experiences from the loving and providential hand of God to shape them for His purposes. Their worldview was in step with the concept of a God-bathed world.

Without going into too much detail the people of Israel worshipped in the Tabernacle/Temple community. Once the nation formed, regular sacrifice was made, life rhythms of rest and work were put in place, and annual celebrations were practiced. The temple was the place to bring offerings. There were a variety of offerings, but all allowed the one bringing the offering to bear witness to the community of the work of God in his life. Some offerings were made to honor God, some for unintentional sins, for purification, others expressing gratefulness for God's work in their lives. The sacrificial system also allowed for the support of the priests.<sup>81</sup> Worship and fellowship in the covenant community was central.

While the Temple was central for the spiritual formation of the community, what became known as the *Shema*<sup>82</sup> of the Old Testament was central for the spiritual formation of the families of Israel. This text follows Moses' repetition of the Ten

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<sup>81</sup> Sacrifice and Temple Service entry in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

<sup>82</sup> שמע is the Hebrew spelling and means "to hear." It is in the imperative voice, thus "carries with it the sense to "obey": hearing that leads to obedience is demanded of the people." P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994), 147.

Commandments. Jesus repeats the *Shema* in the gospels<sup>83</sup> as His summary of the Law with the addition of Leviticus 19:19. Here is the text:

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”<sup>84</sup>

A number of things stand out in this passage that need comment. This passage indicates that the interior of man has priority in moving toward obedience. Heart, soul and might are elaborated so as to emphasize the wholeness of the person. “Israel’s obedience was not to spring from barren legalism based on necessity and duty. It was to arise from a relationship based on love.”<sup>85</sup> “To love the Lord means to choose Him for an intimate relationship and obey His commands.”<sup>86</sup> Second, the commandments or “these words” were to be kept in the heart, mulled upon, memorized, and chewed upon so that they came out with wise application in the varied situations of life. So this text points to obedience welling up from the interior of the person toward action that reflected God’s commandments. Third, these truths and insights were to be passed on to their children in all of life’s settings and at all places familiar to them. This was the responsibility of everyone in Israel, not just Moses or the priesthood. This teaching was to be regular and

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<sup>83</sup> Matt 22:37-38; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27

<sup>84</sup> Deut 6:4-9, NASB 1995.

<sup>85</sup> J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy An Introduction and Commentary the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (London: InterVarsity Press, 1974), 122.

<sup>86</sup> John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 274.

daily.<sup>87</sup> This command then has a missional point as well since future generations were to be taught and all, everyone, in Israel was responsible for passing on the heart of love for God by exemplifying and teaching that love to others. Such an interpretation reflects the Reformation concept of the “priesthood of the believer” and might have even been the background from which Jesus based the Great Commission. The formulation of the *Shema* also speaks to the varied contexts in which the things of God and spiritual life were both relevant and appropriate to share, pointing to a whole-life context for the gospel, not just religious.

One last point on the *Shema* that may help avoid confusion concerning the Trinity. The phrase “the LORD is one” employs a use of the word “one” in Hebrew that grammatically allows for diversity in unity without directly teaching the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>88</sup> At the same time, it does not contradict the Trinity.

In closing out spiritual formation in the Old Testament, mention of a few other verses that have import is warranted. The heart of man is not just a little broken. Jeremiah probably makes the clearest statement concerning the heart of man: “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” This is

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<sup>87</sup> “The Heb. vb. שָׁנָה may be attested in the OT in Deut 6:7: “And you shall recite them (וְשָׁנָתָם) [i.e., Yahweh’s words of v. 6] to your children and speak about them (וְדַבַּרְתָּ) while you rest in your house and while you walk on the way, when you lie down and when you arise” (author tr.). The context of Deut 4–11 makes it clear that the teaching of Yahweh’s commandments to each succeeding generation was a responsibility that Yahweh and his servant Moses had laid upon the nation. In this verse the proposed meaning of שָׁנָה, repeat, recite, seems corroborated by the merisms “while you rest . . . while you walk” and “when you lie down . . . when you arise,” implying that the teaching of Yahweh’s commandments would entail repeated recitation and discussion, and by the verbal parallelism שָׁנָה || דַּבַּר, recite || speak. However, if one were to recognize here Heb. שָׁנָה = Arab. *sanna*, make sharp; prescribe, enact, establish [a law/custom] (Wehr, 433a) instead of Heb. שָׁנָה = Ugar. *šnn*, repeat, recite (cf. Driver, in FS Nötscher, 48), the verse would make equally good sense, but the focus of the injunction would be rather more on the goal of establishing as law/custom the words of Yahweh mentioned in v. 6 than on the repetitive nature of the task.” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, entry for שָׁנָה.

<sup>88</sup> Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Vol. 1, 329.

the core of where man is after the fall. His heart is in a radically corrupt state, so there is much work to do in spiritual formation even from an Old Testament perspective.

Jeremiah writes that God alone can deal with the corruption that plagues man's heart: "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind" so the reshaping of the human heart is in the hands of God – that is, if man will be humble enough to recognize his need and be transparent with his Creator. Such humility pleases God: "For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the *contrite* and *lowly* of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the *lowly* and to revive the heart of the *contrite*."<sup>89</sup> Scripture records no instance of God crushing the broken or lowly of heart. Man, however, must come to see the goodness of God and learn to know Him, which is the constant cry of the Old Testament.<sup>90</sup> Why? Because man was designed to imitate (image) and he needs a reference point outside of himself in order to experience sense and meaning in life. That rightful reference point is the God revealed in the Bible.

### *Spiritual Formation in the New Testament*

Much territory has been covered so in this section the things that will be primarily considered are Jesus, His practices and assumptions, vital aspects of the life of the church in Acts, the role of the Spirit and man's part in the process.

First and foremost Jesus lived Kingdom. He lived in a worldview or mindset that was confident of the loving providential care of the Father and the presence of the

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<sup>89</sup> Is 57:15, emphasis, mine. see also 66:2, and Ps 51:17.

<sup>90</sup> Judg 2:10; Jer 9:22-23, 31:34; Ezek 38:16; Hos 4:1, 6:3; because of sin, often times the lack of knowing God is expressed therefore implying the need to know Him. In each case the referenced verb is *יָדַע*.

Spirit.<sup>91</sup> He was absolutely confident in the abundant goodness of God.<sup>92</sup> Jesus was both spontaneous in prayer and praise as well as practiced in them.<sup>93</sup> He went to secluded places and spent whole evenings in prayer.<sup>94</sup> At least once He spent forty days in prayer and fasting.<sup>95</sup> Jesus also attended to God and His prayerful awareness of the Father in the Spirit was so strong that even His words flowed from God.<sup>96</sup> Jesus and the Father were totally in sync and all that Jesus did was at the Father's initiative. Jesus so naturally and effectively communed with God, His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray.<sup>97</sup>

As to reflection on the Word of God, Jesus is the Master. First of all He knew the Scriptures and was prepared in any situation to quote or teach them. His knowledge of the Scripture at a heart level is evident from the time of His temptations, the beginning of His ministry in Luke through to His crucifixion in Matthew and His walk on the Emmaus road.<sup>98</sup> When He was challenged, He outwitted the elite of the elites of His day.<sup>99</sup> Jesus lived the *Shema*. He knew the Word, taught the Word and had mulled it over so much in His heart that the great minds of the day were no match for him. So Willard is correct when he states that Jesus "is certainly the greatest thinker of the

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<sup>91</sup> Mark 1:10

<sup>92</sup> Matt 6:25-33, 7:11; Luke 11:13

<sup>93</sup> Jn 11:41; Mark 1:35

<sup>94</sup> Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, 6:12

<sup>95</sup> Matt 4:2; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:2

<sup>96</sup> John 5:19, 8:28, 12:49, 14:10

<sup>97</sup> Luke 11:1

<sup>98</sup> Luke 4, Mark 12, Matt 27, etc.; these passages are too numerous to count for this paper.

<sup>99</sup> Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, Pilate, Herod, rulers, elders.

human race: “the most intelligent person who ever lived on earth.””<sup>100</sup> The fact that Jesus reflected or meditated on Scripture is clear from the powerful insights He had. One such instance concerned a debate the Pharisees had with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection. Confronting Jesus with this question, His reply startled them: “But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB. “Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him.””<sup>101</sup> Jesus’ response hung on the fact that a present tense form of the verb “to be” needed to be supplied in the Exodus passage.<sup>102</sup> Willard comments about Jesus in this instance,

Then he proceeds, once again, to develop a teaching about the nature of God, which was always his main concern. Taking the premise that the Sadducees accept, he draws the conclusion they do not want. That the dead are raised follows from God’s self-description to Moses at the burning bush. God describes Himself in that incident as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”...The Sadducees accept this. But at the time of the burning bush incident, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been long “dead,” as Jesus points out. But God is not the God of the dead. That is, a dead person cannot sustain a relation of devotion and service to God, nor can God keep covenant faith with one who no longer exists. In covenant relationship to God one lives.<sup>103</sup>

More examples can be cited, but Jesus knew the Word well and had reflected upon it deeply.

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<sup>100</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, June, 2006), 189.

<sup>101</sup> verses 37-38 in Luke 20:27-39

<sup>102</sup> In Exodus 3:6, it is grammatically correct to assume this with this Hebrew construction and it is supplied in the LXX. “sn This self-revelation by Yahweh prepares for the revelation of the holy name. While no verb is used here, the pronoun and the predicate nominative are a construction used throughout scripture to convey the “I AM” disclosures — “I [am] the God of...” But the significant point here is the naming of the patriarchs, for this God is the covenant God, who will fulfill his promises.” *The NET Bible, First Edition*, (n.p.: Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C., 2005).

<sup>103</sup> Willard, *The Great Omission*, 186-187.

Jesus was also submissive to the will of the Father. Simply put, He was obedient. Paul states, “He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”<sup>104</sup> Jesus at that very intimate and vulnerable moment with God the Father said, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”<sup>105</sup> Once again obedience, but completely flowing from love for God.

Due to Jesus total abandon to God, gentleness, grace, goodness, peace, compassion, mercy, empathy, self-control, etc., totally permeated His being. All of this is seen in His interactions with others and their attraction to Him. Of course they wanted a miracle in their life, but what surprised them was Jesus wanted it too, and that was a reflection of God’s heart and the Spirit that so permeated His life. Jesus’ more frequent question to people was, “What do you want Me to do for you?” So at the core Jesus lived and modeled what He taught with regard to love of God and neighbor. He did it all over Israel<sup>106</sup> because He was on mission to spread the news about the Kingdom and live that Kingdom life before them with His disciples in tow.

So Jesus becomes the example of a God-permeated life, one richly soaked in the Spirit, and the Word and prayer so as to be contagious to others: the fruit of a perfectly formed spiritual life. Jesus called it Kingdom. It is a way of living life confident in the unconditioned, ongoing blessing of God. It is enticing. This is why Jesus preached the Kingdom and said, “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”<sup>107</sup> Repentance is not just from sin, although that is part of it, but from all of a person’s ways, good or bad.

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<sup>104</sup> Phil 2:8

<sup>105</sup> Luke 22:42

<sup>106</sup> Matt 9:35; Luke 4:1

<sup>107</sup> Matt 4:17

So how did this life continue through the early church and what aspects of spiritual formation are apparent in Acts? First the book opens and closes with the Kingdom of God in view and it is a theme throughout the book.<sup>108</sup> As for the disciples, they are given a command by Jesus to wait in Jerusalem, which they do, so they are submissive to their Lord and King. During that time, which amounts to about 10 days, they devoted themselves to prayer throughout with about 120 others.<sup>109</sup> When the Spirit came and saturated them, the whole group began speaking (in a supernatural way) the mighty deeds of God<sup>110</sup> to those who had come from around the empire. When need came, Peter spoke and masterfully interpreted the Word of God from memory for the people so they would understand what God had accomplished through Jesus. At that point many (3,000) wanted to respond and were incorporated into that initial group of 120. Their practices from that point forward were not casual as they continually devoted themselves to “the apostles teaching and to fellowship and to the breaking of bread and prayer.” They did this from house to house and God kept adding to their number daily. As for prayer, it is the habit of the Kingdom seen throughout the book. It occurs 29 times in the 28 chapters of Acts.<sup>111</sup> The Spirit is mentioned as exerting an influence some 54 times<sup>112</sup> throughout the book which indicates the people were aware of what God was doing, thus attending to His will. One other point is that the people knew how the Spirit

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<sup>108</sup> Acts 1:6, 28:31, and the word occurs 6 other times between these two passages.

<sup>109</sup> Acts 1:12-15

<sup>110</sup> Acts 2:11

<sup>111</sup> An informal search using the expression “pray\*” in Accordance Bible Software version 8.4.1 on the NASB 1995 text.

<sup>112</sup> An informal search using the expression “=Spirit “ in Accordance Bible Software version 8.4.1 on the NASB 1995 text. There were 57 hits of which 3 were Spirit inspired citations of the OT.



interacted with them. In the midst of it all many are coming to faith in Christ via the work of not only the Apostles but also those who believed through their word. The spiritual formation activities visible in the early church are prayer, the Word of God, baptism, community, the Lord's Supper, service, outreach, giving, fasting, and celebration<sup>113</sup> yet none of these are done in legalistic fashion, but under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

While the early believers were not perfect, they were engaged in practices and with people that allowed them to take on the Kingdom lifestyle of Jesus so that the Spirit had sway in their life. This is substantial and why Paul can tell people to be filled with the Spirit and the concept be understood.<sup>114</sup> They saw evidence of it all around in the first century. They also saw the kind of habits or lifestyle that gave greater opportunity for it to happen. It was a lifestyle that was radically contrary to the world and its ways.<sup>115</sup> Thus the early church understood the repentance Jesus requested when He said the Kingdom is near. It was not a turning from sins alone, but from sin, or rather a lifestyle apart from God. This fundamental change, repentance, is a one-time event that orients the believer toward God in relationship and has in its trail a process of change or growth in that Kingdom lifestyle.

At this point it is necessary to speak of obedience. In Jesus' commission to the apostles regarding making disciples, He asked them to teach others to obey all that He

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<sup>113</sup> Joy or rejoicing occurs 11 times, fasting 4 times, a variety of non-apostles are involved in leading others to Christ (Acts 6, 8, 11:19-21).

<sup>114</sup> Eph 5:18

<sup>115</sup> Rom 12:1-2

had commanded them.<sup>116</sup> Obedience, not empty legalism, is what Jesus is asking.

Religion is not the point, because Jesus indicated that the most religious people of the day refused to enter the Kingdom and also prevented others from doing so.<sup>117</sup>

Relationship, intimacy with God and others is at the heart of what Jesus is after and it begins with the inside of the person.<sup>118</sup> Jesus and the apostles teach the Spirit permeated

life, Kingdom life. Dallas Willard, in a lecture he gave at Baylor University, said,

“Obedience is the organ of knowledge in the Spiritual life.”<sup>119</sup> This reflects the thought of Jesus in John 14:21, “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” Here obedience is solidly placed in a relationship of love, inter-Trinitarian love, and the experiential result is knowledge of God similar to the idea of union<sup>120</sup> in the classical understanding of spiritual formation.

Couple these concepts in Paul when he says, “But you did not learn Christ in this way...lay aside the old self... put on the new self, which is in the likeness of God”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Matt 28:18-20; the verb is τηρέω for obey, and according to BDAG, in this instance means to “to persist in obedience, keep, observe, fulfill, pay attention to.” Frederick W. Danker and others, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>117</sup> Matt 23:13

<sup>118</sup> Matt 23:26 and 28 focus on the need for inward purging or cleansing so that the right kind of life, Kingdom life will result.

<sup>119</sup> Dallas Willard, *Finding the Kingdom of God Now*, QuickTime mp3 media file, Recorded Church Staff Conference at Baylor University, February 2004, 4:52 min to 5:09 min. 2004 (accessed from ChristianAudio.com on December 18, 2010, originally as 3 separate sound files that are now combined, <http://christianaudio.com/church-staff-retreat-2004-dallas-willard>).

<sup>120</sup> see ἐμφανίζω in Danker and others, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. and also Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986).

<sup>121</sup> Eph 4:20-24 and Col 3:9-10

weaving throughout the discussion the differences between the old and the new. When Paul does this it is generally in the context of the Spirit and His place.<sup>122</sup> In those contexts, Paul is contrasting lifestyles between the old life and the Christ life. Paul's point is to always encourage the life like Christ would live in the people he is addressing. He generally refers to this putting off and putting on as walking in a manner worthy of Christ.<sup>123</sup> In an oral culture, Paul commended singing as a mnemonic device for learning this new kind of life so that the truths of the Christian life could go deep to lifestyle.<sup>124</sup> This allowed the "word of Christ" to dwell richly within the believer.<sup>125</sup> Throughout the New Testament, there is a strong intertwining of the Word and Spirit as the Word is what people respond to and the application is the work of the Spirit. The putting off and putting on in these passages appear to be a process not a one-time event, and the putting off always precedes the putting on of Christ, so the recognition of need of change and then orienting toward that change by prayer and the Spirit's leadership.

Along with this prayer is encouraged and commanded. Strong language is used about its necessity: "devote yourselves to prayer," "pray at all times," "pray without ceasing," etc. Mulholland after addressing the need to live in a trustful way toward God says this concerning prayer in Philippians 4:

*Prayer (proseuche)* seems to be Paul's term for the deep inner posture of one's being toward God in open receptivity and pliable responsiveness...a posture that undergirds all the activities and relationships of life...a habitual orientation of our being toward God at the deepest levels....*Supplication* reminds us of the nature of a suppliant—one who recognizes his or her condition of inadequacy and impotence, an

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<sup>122</sup> Rom 8, Gal 5, Eph 4-5, Col 3

<sup>123</sup> Eph 4:1, Col 1:10, 1 Thess 2:12

<sup>124</sup> Eph 5:19 and Col 3:16

<sup>125</sup> Rom 10:17, Col 3:16

utter inability to provide what is needed. With this, the suppliant acknowledges the adequacy, power and ability of the one whose aid is sought...If we have not first entered this posture of prayer and supplication, our requests tend to be very narrowly focused upon our own agenda and have their center in our self-referenced matrix of life. The posture of prayer and supplication, however, places us and our situations into the deeper matrix of God's presence [Kingdom] and purpose.<sup>126</sup>

Prayer, when oriented around the sufficiency of God, is a conduit for Kingdom life to happen. Prayer then expresses a relaxed trust in the providential presence and love of God.

To capture the New Testament orientation briefly, obedience, putting off and putting on are an outcome of *faith*; expressing that life transformation results in *love* (words and deeds) and is accomplished through continued exposure to the Word and Spirit; *hope* is expressed through proclaiming the Kingdom, prayer and standing firm in the lifestyle of Christ in the context of a world that is radically opposed to that Kingdom.<sup>127</sup>

#### History's Impact on Spiritual Formation

The biblical and apostolic record is clear and the practices of the spiritual life include prayer, the Word of God, and reflection, meaning the internalization of the Word in the life of the believer by the Spirit's power resulting in application and obedience. The classical disciplines arise in a static church; that is, they arise in a church that is formalized and appropriated by the dominant culture (no longer challenging that culture).<sup>128</sup> It assumes a place of privilege through the state.<sup>129</sup> The church is also

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<sup>126</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, Kindle Location, 806-821.

<sup>127</sup> Thom Wolf, *The Pattern: God's Endvision* (GEM Annual Conference, 2009, Unpublished paper, 2005), <http://www.universityinstitute.in/images/the%20pattern.pdf> (accessed December 11, 2009). See also Rom 12:1-2.

<sup>128</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), Ch. 3 §13. "The christianizing of the state amounted therefore in great measure to a paganizing and secularizing of the church. The world overcame the church, as much as the church overcame the world, and the temporal gain of Christianity was in many respects cancelled by spiritual loss."

touched by the corruption of power and in the Middle Ages expanded by the use of that power.<sup>130</sup> In that context, the focus of the disciplines changes from one of relationship with God and dynamic engagement with Him to perfecting one's salvation.

Monasticism arises in this context and brings many things to the practice of the spiritual life, but monasticism was not without problems. The disciplines speak strongly to the way the spiritual life is appropriated, but during the middle ages, the laity did not have access to such without changing their vocation. While some monastics engaged in extension of the church,<sup>131</sup> their primary focus was escaping the lure of the world and emphasizing their own progress toward salvation.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, the popular understanding of God as a lover of man's soul and benevolent King had changed to a judge with a propensity to condemn unless worthiness was proven in religious acts, which produced a legalistic moralism over time rather than obedience flowing from a sense of being loved. Salvation was no longer a gift from a King who is a grand lover and wants to bless. Many good things entered as the monastics desired to see the church renewed, such as the divine hours, the discipline of contemplation, study, prayer, silence, solitude, etc.<sup>133</sup> Some wanted to encourage the emotional experience of Christ,

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<sup>129</sup> "Following the Edict of Toleration issued by Constantine in 313, the church experienced an influx of members and a position in the empire that resulted in a perceived laxity of standards." F. Gregory Rogers, "Spiritual Direction in the Orthodox Christian Tradition," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 30, no. 4 (2002): 276-289.

<sup>130</sup> Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Volume 1: Beginnings to 1500 Revised Edition* (Harper & Row, 1975), 350, 405. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Ch.1 §6.

<sup>131</sup> Timothy Paul Jones, *Christian History Made Easy: 13 Weeks to a Better Understanding of Church History* (Torrance, CA: Rose Publishing, Inc., 1999), 61.

<sup>132</sup> Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Volume 1*, 222, 336.

<sup>133</sup> Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Volume 1*, 335.

which gave rise to the mystics.<sup>134</sup> However, the great gift that was fostered in these communities was the practice of continual attention to the presence of God through a life of discipline. Those who understood and practiced the disciplines from a platform of grace and God's love often had an expansive impact on the church.<sup>135</sup>

The Reformation returns the Word to the laity, the availability of the Kingdom to the believer in Christ, but the issues that arise from that for the spiritual life practically leave it devoid of the disciplines necessary to appropriate the Kingdom life (especially the discipline of Spiritual Direction). Certain groups both before and after the Reformation that emphasized the Word of God and prayer, focusing on God's desires through certain of the disciplines often resulted in movements.<sup>136</sup> That life which spawned the early Christian movement returns and is now available, but its power seems lacking at the universal level visible in the early church. Due to the Renaissance and the printing press, the shift seems more towards man's intellect, and in the circumstances of the day, away from the practices of the disciplines. That is not to say that people did not pray or read the Word of God and reflect, but to say that the direct engagement with God through prayer and the Word does not move into universal practice although the understanding of justification by grace through faith spread quickly. The political-cultural-ecclesial

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<sup>134</sup> Jones, *Christian History Made Easy*, 63.

<sup>135</sup> St. John of the Cross, Theresa of Avila, Bernard of Clairvaux.

<sup>136</sup> Steve Addison, *Movements That Change the World* (Smyrna, DE: Missional Press, 2009), Peder Stiansen, "Church Reform in the Late Middle Ages," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 105, no. 418 (1948): 213-233., Peder Stiansen, "Church Reform in the Late Middle Ages," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 105, no. 420 (1948): 444-462., Peder Stiansen, "Church Reform in the Late Middle Ages," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 105, no. 419 (1948): 342-363., Peder Stiansen, "Church Reform in the Late Middle Ages," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 106, no. 421 (1949): 76-96., Norman L. Geisler, "The Historical Development of Roman Catholicism," *Christian Apologetics Journal* 4, no. 1 (2005): 22-63. All give various insights into the rise of movements prior to and after the Reformation. In attempting to be brief in this section on History, things have been stated in looming generalities.

environment of power also had an influence. Add to that the onslaught of the Enlightenment that removes theology from its throne in the academy to an irrelevant curiosity, which creates the environment that exists in the postmodernism of the present day.<sup>137</sup>

Psychology as an outgrowth of rationalism and a rationalistic worldview fills the void that the practices of spiritual formation once had. This is not to say that psychology is bad or evil. It arises due to a very apparent problem, man's struggle for significance and meaning in life, and it also provides solutions. The arising of psychology (an inadvertent and subconscious recognition of the fall) today speaks to man's deep need for inner change, something spiritual formation is all about and to which that discipline can continue to contribute. Postmodernism has left man without compass in life, but with spiritual longings for a better life today whether inside or outside the church.<sup>138</sup> The Enlightenment has left its mark and that is a worldview empty of the God who is there, empty of the God-bathed world and the radical lover of man's soul.<sup>139</sup> The current recovery of spiritual formation practices for the Church, with the goal of attending to the loving presence of God, is a hopeful signal that God is at work to release His Kingdom contagion once again for renewal and expansion of the Bride of Christ.

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<sup>137</sup> "A factor in the spiritual crisis is the 'autonomous self,' born when Descartes located indubitable knowledge in the act of thinking itself rather than in God.... The autonomous self has liberated itself from society, family, and God." Ellen T. Charry, "Spiritual Formation by the Doctrine of the Trinity," *Theology Today* 54, no. 3 (1997): 367-380.

<sup>138</sup> Susanne Johnson, "Christian Spiritual Formation in An Age of 'Whatever.'" *Review & Expositor* 98, no. 3 (2001): 309-331.

<sup>139</sup> Nicholas C. McMinn, Mark R. Bissell, Leslie D. Howard, "Spiritual Directors and Clinical Psychologists: A Comparison of Mental Health and Spiritual Values," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 28, no. 4 (2000): 308-320.

## Toward a Philosophy of Spiritual Formation

What remains is to synthesize the forgoing into a philosophy of spiritual formation. Much of that has been done throughout this chapter. The process of spiritual formation begins within the context of a Biblical and Christian worldview that is thoroughly tied to the faith in its orthodoxy. The cornerstone of that includes God as a radical lover of man's soul who wants to redeem and bless man with the beauty of His presence, which is available in Jesus Christ, and in Him alone.

Changing one's mind about the goodness of God, the veracity of God's Word, and in humility, submitting to God's good desires available in Jesus Christ begins the road of the spiritually quickened life in this God-bathed world. As Jesus mentioned, "Repent for the Kingdom is at hand," this is not just repentance from sins, but sin (self-orientation and non-God orientation) and all ways that are reliant upon the self rather than God. So this means not just the putting off the sin one is aware of but also the good ways upon which one relies that are devoid of God's presence, will, and ways. Life then is a series of repentances, changes, at a deeper and deeper level over a lifetime as one's awareness increases that continually leads toward greater and greater likeness to Christ. This is accomplished by the power of the Spirit, through "putting off the old" man, lifestyle, ways, and "putting on the new" man.<sup>140</sup> As one becomes more mature in that process the possibility of a Spirit-permeated life becomes a greater and greater reality. The Apostle Paul called this "Christ in me" and that reflects the unity seen in the Trinity.<sup>141</sup> The result of such a life is the fruit of the Spirit and a "life like Christ," permeated by God

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<sup>140</sup> Eph 4:20-24

<sup>141</sup> Gal 2:20; Col 3:3-4, John 14:21, 17:21-23



and contagious, thus fostering a spontaneous generation of Kingdom expansion.<sup>142</sup>

Indeed, Mulholland in commenting on John 17:20-23 says this,

Here is our ultimate conformity to the image of Christ—transforming oneness with God in Christ. But note especially the purpose or focus of this transforming union: “that they also may be in us, *so that the world may believe...* that they may become perfectly one, *so that the world may know that you have sent me*” (vv. 21, 23). Wholeness in Christ, transforming union, is for the sake of others!<sup>143</sup>

In the classical Christian tradition, growth in Christ has been likened to a journey of stages. “The journey motif for spiritual formation was adopted by both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians and is conceived of as including three stages: purgation, illumination, and union.”<sup>144</sup> To these three stages, Mulholland adds an initial stage called *awakening*, which he defines as the time God calls one out of unlikeness to Christ and adds it is the time when the person sees something of themselves as they are and begin to see something of God as God actually is in reality.<sup>145</sup> *Purgation* (purification) is “the process of bringing our behavior, our attitudes, our desires, into increasing harmony with our growing perception of what the Christlike life is all about.”<sup>146</sup> *Illumination* “refers to a deepening experience of the love, joy, and peace of God along with a growing desire to surrender to the will to God. It is characterized as a time of becoming dispassionate for all things not God, and passionately attached to God

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<sup>142</sup> Acts 1:8, ἔσσεσθέ, is future, indicative (meaning representing a state of fact) in this verse. The result of the Spirit coming upon the believer (non-charismatic idea) is “witnessing” to Christ, and not necessarily in the way of traditional Evangelicalism, but in a way that will result in people coming to Christ and the Kingdom life. Such is the case throughout the book of Acts.

<sup>143</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, Kindle Location, 925-930.

<sup>144</sup> Gary W. Moon, “Spiritual Direction: Meaning, Purpose, and Implications for Mental Health Professionals,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 30, no. 4 (2002): 264-275.

<sup>145</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, Kindle Location, 689-701.

<sup>146</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, Kindle Location, 714-718.

and his kingdom.”<sup>147</sup> *Union* or “[t]he mystery of “Christ-in-me” (Colossians 1:26, 27; [see also Gal 2:20]) is realized as an interior surrender of all components of the person—thought, emotion, will, behavior, relationships, and soul functioning—is made to the transforming presence of Christ.”<sup>148</sup>

According to Mulholland, these stages can occur again as a person may be at different places along the journey in various areas of his life.<sup>149</sup> Rogers says this concerning the process:

Two things should be noted here. First, even though we use the term stages, they are not to be thought of as chronological in the sense where we complete one and move to another, never to repeat it. One goes through these stages and back again, accomplishing a level of virtue and communion with God, then falling again into sin or forgetfulness, then advancing further in virtue. The wrestling goes on even to our last breath. The process might be imagined as an ascending spiral, generally moving one “from glory to glory,” going over the same ground at a higher level (2 Corinthians 3:18).<sup>150</sup>

Nonetheless, the desired outcome is Union (in Orthodox circles this is also called *theosis* or *deification*) and Christlikeness. Awakening can be likened to coming to Christ, but there are aspects as well that agree with the changes or steps of transformation that take place thereafter. Purgation or purification of all the old lifestyle trust habits is similar to “putting off the old man.” Illumination could be looked at as “putting on the new man”

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<sup>147</sup> Moon, “Spiritual Direction: Meaning, Purpose, and Implications for Mental Health Professionals,” 269.

<sup>148</sup> Moon, “Spiritual Direction: Meaning, Purpose, and Implications for Mental Health Professionals,” 269.

<sup>149</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, Kindle Location, 690-694.

<sup>150</sup> Rogers, “Spiritual Direction in the Orthodox Christian Tradition,” 281.

or “putting on love” because it is “characterized by increasing social concern, not out of obligation but out of a deep sense of God’s love poured into our hearts for others.”<sup>151</sup>

The process of spiritual formation or growth must be intentional and planned. As such spiritual disciplines have a necessary role to play along the journey. “A Spiritual Discipline is an intentionally directed action by which we do what we can do in order receive from God the ability (or power) to do what we cannot do by direct effort.”<sup>152</sup>

“The aim of the disciplines in the spiritual life — and, specifically, in the following of Christ — is the transformation of the total state of the soul.”<sup>153</sup> These are a means of opening the soul up to the actions of grace so that Christlikeness is even possible.

“Graciously God invites us to work in cooperation with the Spirit through the spiritual disciplines.”<sup>154</sup>

Foster, Willard, Calhoun and Whitney have written works that both delineate and describe the disciplines as well as their benefits. Solitude, silence, fasting, celebration community, Bible study, Lectio Divina, Liturgy, prayer, confession, worship, meditation, evangelism, are some among the many. Adele Calhoun’s handbook has over 60 spiritual disciplines with their descriptions and purpose.<sup>155</sup> Mulholland encourages people to take personality into account when approaching the disciplines.<sup>156</sup> Over

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<sup>151</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, Kindle Location, 879-883.

<sup>152</sup> Foster and Helmers, *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation*, 16.

<sup>153</sup> Willard, *The Great Omission*, 151.

<sup>154</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 90.

<sup>155</sup> Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

<sup>156</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, Ch. 6, 7.

emphasis on the spiritual disciplines one is naturally attracted to can lead to neglect of those disciplines that would nurture the weaker part of the soul, but are just as necessary. Variety, and regularity are important. They are after all “disciplines” and like becoming good at any skill, practice is essential. However, when or if the practice of the disciplines become legalistic rather than motivated from a desire to love God, then their effectiveness for transformation ceases. The disciplines are about relationship with God, not a system of works for God or perfection, but space to make oneself available to God’s transforming grace. These exercises in spiritual formation cultivate intimacy with God, a real experience of Him (עֲדָרָה), and the ability to live in the God-bathed world, that is in deep connection with Him as Jesus did (John 5:19). The spiritual disciplines just create the space in life for fostering the kind of intimacy with God that when life is at its hardest or most difficult point, love-aligned obedience to God is the natural result. Foster states it this way, “The bottom-line goal of practicing the Spiritual Disciplines is so that when the moment of action comes, our automatic default-mode is to “act naturally” according to the Spirit, not the flesh, as Paul describes in such marvelous detail in chapters 6 through 8 of his letter to the Romans.”<sup>157</sup>

In process, the believer grows in greater self-awareness, greater God-awareness, and that which has to be “put off” and “put on” in the lifestyle enters the deep recesses of the worldview, relational structures and new trust structures with God allow for those supernatural (formed by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit) acts of obedience to have their natural place.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Foster and Helmers, *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation*, 153.

<sup>158</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, Ch. 8.

Psychology is moving in ways that are now reflecting the “way” of this deep transformation, not the method, due to understanding relational and other ways of knowing that are no longer restricted by Enlightenment paradigms. This research is pointing to the importance of “affect” or “emotion.” Evidence is mounting that personality structures, deep structures, are affected by religious experience. The new thinking in psychology seeks to close the gap between head and heart — cognitive and affective processes—with regard to relationships and religion. Spiritual disciplines as opening to the way of transformation are now being seen as valid in the area of psychology (among Christian psychologists). Deep transformation following an integration of “apophatic” (*via negativa*, or unknowing or subtractive) and “kataphatic” (*via positiva*, addition) approaches integrated with psychology are pointing to spiritual formation practices that have been in place since Augustine. The “apophatic” practices deal with hidden structures that bend the heart toward patterns of behavior that are destructive and unless removed, even with the addition of new ways of thinking or models of behaving (kataphatic, additive), lapsing to previous patterns remains a strong tendency. When lifestyle structures have been modified through the subtraction of destructive patterns as well as the addition of healthy patterns at the core of the heart, then the ability to love grows and moves one outward toward God and others. For transformation to be effective it must be oriented around an end, which is the capacity to love the other/Other as He truly is.<sup>159</sup> This also returns to the *missio Dei*, and the fact

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<sup>159</sup> The thought in this paragraph flows from the insights gained in this series of articles: G. Michael Leffel, “Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 1. Prospects and Prescriptions for Reconstructive Dialogue,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 263-280. G. Michael Leffel, “Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 2. Implicit Morality and “Minimal Prosociality,”” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 281-297. G. Michael Leffel, “Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 3.

that transformation in the Kingdom of God naturally leads to blessing others with an awareness of the presence and love of God (Great Commission).

So what is the measure of maturity: love.<sup>160</sup> Since the life of Christ deeply reflected the Spirit's influence, it is probably best to say that the measure of maturity in the Christian life is the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.<sup>161</sup> It is then, when dominated or rather filled by the Spirit in the context of a God-bathed world where God is a lover seeking to restore and redeem rather than a judge hungry to condemn, that man can freely and without fear reach out in love to his neighbor. This is only possible by one who, under the Spirit's invitation, has trained well in the disciplines that cultivate the ability to continually attend to the loving presence of the God who is there.

#### A Personal Note from the Author

The process of the past few years both in the SFML program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and within Greater Europe Mission have caused this writer to dwell deeply on the spiritual life. Yes, this has been a "hobby" area over the past 18 years, much of it fearfully glancing over hard-defined evangelical edges of doctrine, to

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A Moral Motive Analysis." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 298-316. Mark E. Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews." *Review of General Psychology* 8, no. 1 (2004): 3-58, Robert A. Watson, "Toward Union in Love: The Contemplative Spiritual Tradition and Contemporary Psychoanalytic Theory in the Formation of Persons," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 28, no. 4 (2000): 262-292.

<sup>160</sup> The author believes Bearnard of Clairvaux's four degrees of love from his treatise *On the Love of God* is a challenging measure of maturity (1) love of self for self's sake; (2) love of God for self's sake; (3) love of God for God's sake; (4) love of self for God's sake. See Foster, Richard J. and James Bryan Smith. *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals & Groups*. (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 40-45.

<sup>161</sup> Gal 5:22-23

discover a world much different, but consistent with both Scripture and the heart of Evangelicalism.

This journey starts with Henry Blackaby in 1993 with his work, *Experiencing God*.<sup>162</sup> This challenged this writer to think about God's initiative and God's interaction with His people. Blackaby made sense stating this is available to everyone at all times, but it needs to be cultivated by a life of obedience, immediate responsiveness to the Spirit's leadings, consistent with God's Word and a result of knowing God. Such thinking tapped into and pressed deeply into this author's conscious Blackaby's use of John 5:19, "Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner," as well as statements like this: "The words that I say to you I do not speak on My initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works" (John 14:10).<sup>163</sup> These statements indicate a high degree of attention to the Father and communication with Him — a continual prayerful state. Ideas like these coupled with other verses, "Be imitators of me as I also am of Christ,"<sup>164</sup> all began to shape this author's thinking concerning lived Christianity.

Ideas such as these came to support a concept that God gave this author very early in his Christian journey: *Jesus Christ is not only an example of who God is, but also an example of what a relationship with God is like*. Jesus was a picture of connection with God the Father as humans could interact with Him. Recently an interesting distinction

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<sup>162</sup> Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 1993).

<sup>163</sup> See also, John 8:26, 28; 12:49; 14:24; 17:8

<sup>164</sup> 1 Cor 11:1; Eph 5:1; 1 Thess 1:6

between the Greek word, οἶδα and γινώσκω, two words for knowledge or knowing, emerged to give some insight. In John 8:55, these two words are put in contrast regarding how Jesus knows God the Father and the fact the Pharisees do not.<sup>165</sup> Jesus has “instinctual,” “inherent” or “intuitive” knowledge of God flowing from a relationship that has formed Him deeply (speaking in human terms), indicating that He has such intimate knowledge of the Father through experience that His every word and action flow out of regard for that relationship and in a way that is deeply supportive of it. In contrast, the Pharisees do not know God the Father, and Jesus is speaking of knowledge that flows from experiencing God the Father, not just “knowledge” in an intellectual sense but experiential. So the Pharisees lack real and experiential knowledge of God and this is underlined in the text, as they want to kill Jesus. Deep intimacy with the Father, Trinity as John 17 would put it, is what the spiritual life is all about and what Christ-followers are invited into, and it is an intimacy that is so impressed with God that it must impress others with Him. In other words, it is an intimacy that draws the believer out and forward to proclaim God’s excellencies by an intrinsic compelling.<sup>166</sup> It is just this pursuit that motivates: how does one grow to know God in this way?

Obviously that relationship has to be cultivated pro-actively and through the disciplines of the spiritual life. The early church engaged in these disciplines. They are present in the Old Testament, and re-emphasized throughout Church History. The goal is *union*, as Christ had and experienced *union* experientially with the Father. Yet, it is

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<sup>165</sup> John 8:55, “καὶ οὐκ ἐγνώκατε αὐτόν, ἐγὼ δὲ οἶδα αὐτόν. καὶ εἶπω ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν, ἔσομαι ὅμοιος ὑμῖν ψεύστης· ἀλλὰ οἶδα αὐτόν καὶ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ τηρῶ.” The emphasis is mine. See John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), John 8:55.

<sup>166</sup> 1 Peter 2:9-10



necessary to emphasize the goal is not a *union* of perfection, but of relationship, thus while morality is a strong part of its outcome, it is not the focus, *love* is. So it is not about becoming perfect, as seen in much of the Monastic efforts of the Middle Ages, but about the pursuit of God and the pursuits of God. The focus is appropriately responding to the presence of the God who is there and is speaking. Living in light of the Presence, the Supernatural, in this God-bathed and permeated world. As stated, that Presence, has an identity, a face, and it is that of Jesus Christ. There is no access to God apart from Jesus as noted previously. And it is that Jesus who defines God as so radically good.

Moreover, the inerrant Word of God does not show “heroes” of the faith that are unique and unachievable today, but “ordinary” people who lived in response to the presence of God and became “heroes” because they chose to engage with the living and true God who is there. Those who could see His goodness, live in light of that blessing and from the basis of that blessing, were often distinguished and placed on the pages so the readers could learn that it is not perfect people, but people who’s heart pursuit is God and His ways that is of import. God creates the perfection as the believer walks with Him. The disciplines of the spiritual life aid in fostering a person’s responsiveness to God as well as his attention to Him.

So this writer is simply adding his heart motivations to the writing of this chapter, which actually flow from the “inquiry” is this true and possible. As such, it is both possible and true, but this writer’s experience is not fully there yet. Part of that issue has to do with learning to live humbly from the point and position of extreme blessing by God, rather than fear and wrath based on performance. Another aspect has to do with seeing how much the cultural worldview (Enlightenment, Modernity as in chapter 1) has

encumbered the process due to a deep-set empiricism (5 senses) that is difficult to overcome. It appears to this writer, that Evangelicalism as well as other Western forms of Christianity is riddled with similar issues, especially when examining current statistics. It also appears that as pro-active cultivation of a relationship with God through the disciplines continues, the instinctive or intuitive knowledge of God will impel a person forward more powerfully as a witness of His Kingdom, but just as Jesus understood, the plausibility of God being experientially present must be permissible by the person's worldview, not just a great intellectual idea or point of reference. The disciplines allow one to cultivate such a worldview as an outflow of a growing experience of God, one that can reshape the current worldview, in part subconsciously, possessed.

### **Conclusion**

As such, for real growth and transformation to occur in the Christian life it must be grounded in the Biblical worldview and one must be intentional and plan for it through implementation of the spiritual disciplines. Three core practices, hearing the Word of God, prayer, meditation (reflection), find their expression in a variety of spiritual disciplines that create space for God and the grace that reforms the image of God in man. The goal is Christlikeness expressed in the growing capacity to love God and others and the transformation takes place at the deep interior structures of the personality. God's gracious acting brings about Christlike transformation in the space created in the practice of the spiritual disciplines and in no way is a result of man's efforts. The goal of Christlikeness flows from man being created in God's image by reflecting God's glory through a *union* of love. Because of the blessing from God's

presence and work, this love cannot but speak of the greatness and goodness of God with others, putting man on mission with God and contagiously expanding the Kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONNECTING SPIRITUAL FORMATION TO THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

#### Introduction

In approaching the literature review, it is necessary to indicate that the material that touches the subject of spiritual formation flows from many fields of knowledge: theology, psychology, religion, philosophy, spirituality, history, natural science, and many of their sub-disciplines. Consequently the limits allowed for this portion of the thesis permit only select articles and books to be reviewed here from the more than 390 that were considered. There is, however, a growing body of literature that strongly points to the non-material aspects of man (soul) as deduced from the empirical (Modern) approaches of science provoking a rethinking of the foundational assumptions of psychology and its anthropology. Moreover, evidence is growing for the impact of religious and spiritual practices on the psychological health of the individual. All of this points toward the practice of spiritual disciplines opening the door to literal, empirically real, experienced and actual transformation of the person towards Christlikeness, as it allows for the positing of an external agent (God) acting upon the individual (grace). This is considered very exciting, even though it is only an empirically sourced return to understanding the universe as God-bathed,<sup>1</sup> as the saints of the New Testament did.

While this literature has been growing in recent decades, it has yet to be disseminated to the masses. As such, the context in which this study is being done, finds itself heavily influenced by the tenets of Modernism and the Enlightenment, which tend toward a practiced non-supernaturalism (at best) within the worldview context. In turn, this

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<sup>1</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, April, 1998), 61.

influences the expectation and anticipation of God's presence and experienced immediacy in all aspects of life, including the missionaries of Greater Europe Mission (as seen in Chapter 1). Yet as the movement of spiritual formation has gained momentum and people become aware, disciplined implementation of spiritual practices foster an opening of the person's worldview to the experienced immediacy of God in transformation. Consequently the motivation for belief and obedience potentially transfers from an extrinsic source to an intrinsic one. In the process, this fosters the potential for intrinsically motivated believers to express their excitement of their experience of God through Jesus in ways that supply a contagion for spontaneous Kingdom expansion.

Spiritual disciplines become gateways to an experienced presence of God that is real and worldview altering, challenging the non-supernaturalism that forms most Westerners and is implicit in the current educational systems. At the same time, they open one to live in the Kingdom of God as responsive to His presence and leading, much as Jesus did, as well as move the motivational center from the externals of religion to the internals of relationship with God. Believers then actually live in that Kingdom and grow in the knowledge of its culture, in which God is always active and present. In part, this is what Jesus meant when He said, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt 4:17). It was a call to live in the fullness of reality that is permeated with the living, loving presence of the true God as exemplified in Jesus. The culture of the Kingdom is a call then to the fullness of real reality, inclusive of the immensity of God, which is radically different than the worldview construct of Westerners. Jesus then becomes "the way" of

continually living in full awareness of God's presence (John 14:6; John 15) and empowering possibilities.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that the literature is supportive of the ideas and assumptions previously stated. Initially, it is necessary to state the hypotheses being considered as that limits to some degree the literature to be reviewed. Beyond that it is important to address literature that touches on the proposed study. This includes reviewing articles and books on well-being, missionary attrition, ministry effectiveness, worldview, spiritual influences on psychological health, transformation, spiritual disciplines, relationship with God, obedience, and Kingdom movements. While vast amount of literature exists on these topics, this author has been limited by access to many resources due to living in a foreign culture; however, what is presented here is sufficient to support both the reasoning and the need for the proposed study. After dealing with literature that relates to the hypothesis, the intention is to review the major evangelical works related to the disciplines, including their potential for transformation, impact on worldview, obedience and Kingdom.

### **Hypotheses**

As stated in chapter 1, the hypotheses seek to discern whether there is a relationship or influence of the disciplines on the missionaries' sense of well-being (experience of God), perceived ministry effectiveness, and retention on the field. In attempting to discern the existence of a relationship between the practice of spiritual disciplines by Greater Europe Mission missionaries and these spheres, there is no intention to propose a causal relationship. Determining causality would take a much more rigorous and robust

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<sup>2</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994).

study, especially if a relationship is perceived to exist on the basis of this current study. Secondly, the disciplines are not causally related to any outcome, but they can influence the environment for those outcomes. The literature, however, does suggest a relationship exists regarding the practice of spiritual disciplines and these areas, with the exception of perceived ministry effectiveness, which appears to have little or no research relating that to the practices of spiritual formation.

### Spiritual Well-Being

At the outset of wondering how to measure one's affective experience of God (well-being), many instruments were discovered that appeared promising. One such instrument, entitled the *Holy Spirit Questionnaire* (HSQ) was developed by Sandvik and Ingram. The HSQ is a seven-item measurement tool.<sup>3</sup> There are two unpublished papers related to its development and evaluation, which are mentioned in *Correlation of the Holy Spirit Questionnaire with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Spiritual Assessment Inventory*,<sup>4</sup> also coauthored by one of the instrument's developers. The empirical evaluation by Hurst indicated that the questionnaire did what it was purported to do, which is to measure the subject's perceived knowledge of the Holy Spirit,<sup>5</sup> yet it was unclear as to whether that translated into a person's ability to be filled with the Spirit, so the correlational study indicated by the title took place, and the HSQ was compared to the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) and the Spiritual Well Being Scale (SWBS). The authors elected to use

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<sup>3</sup> Jennifer L. Fee and John A. Ingram, "Correlation of the Holy Spirit Questionnaire with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Spiritual Assessment Inventory," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 32, no. 2 (2004): 114.

<sup>4</sup> Fee and Ingram, "Correlation of the Holy Spirit Questionnaire with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Spiritual Assessment Inventory," 104-114.

<sup>5</sup> Fee and Ingram, "Correlation of the Holy Spirit Questionnaire with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Spiritual Assessment Inventory," 105.

the SAI to measure maturity and the SWBS to measure well-being as combined indicators that should together validate whether filling of the Holy Spirit equated with one's perceived knowledge of the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> The HSQ correlated well with these two instruments, but there were surprises: (1) the sub scale of the SAI dealing with grandiosity (G) positively correlated with the HSQ rather than negatively;<sup>7</sup> (2) the existential well-being sub scale of the SWBS correlated positively, but the authors seemed to reshape their assumptions and hypothesis as a result, indicating it is a logical outcome of filling by the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup> The measure that the HSQ is designed to assess is inadequate for the purposes of this study since it seeks to quantifiably assess one's perceived knowledge of the Holy Spirit rather than the affective experience of God or well-being. Moreover, it does not appear to be a widely used or tested instrument.

The article on the HSQ introduced two other instruments, the SAI and the SWBS. Both of these inventories have value and the relevant publications for each of these measures and their import to this study will be evaluated. The Spiritual Assessment Inventory was developed by Todd Hall and Keith Edwards and their conceptualization of the instrument detailed in their article, *The Initial Development and Factor Analysis of*

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<sup>6</sup> Fee and Ingram, "Correlation of the Holy Spirit Questionnaire with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Spiritual Assessment Inventory," 105.

<sup>7</sup> Fee and Ingram, "Correlation of the Holy Spirit Questionnaire with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Spiritual Assessment Inventory," 110. "The G scale is a measure of grandiosity present in a person's conception of their relationship with God." The developers of the SAI state: "Grandiose relationships are associated with the maintenance of an inflated sense of importance and uniqueness in order to defend against the seemingly all-encompassing devalued aspects of self. People who generally relate in this way tend to alternate between extremes of idealization and devaluation of others (including God), depending on the degree to which the other maintains their self-esteem." Todd W. Hall, "The Initial Development and Factor Analysis of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 24, no. 3 (1996): 233-246.

<sup>8</sup> Fee and Ingram, "Correlation of the Holy Spirit Questionnaire with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and Spiritual Assessment Inventory," 112.



*the Spiritual Assessment Inventory*.<sup>9</sup> The theoretical basis is sound and flows from object relations theory and a solid Judeo-Christian worldview that sees maturity as a function of relationship indexed by intimacy.<sup>10</sup> Two dimensions were proposed with five factors. The two dimensions are Awareness of God and Quality of Relationship with God, which is conceived as a more psychological aspect of maturity and has 4 sub scales, Instability, Grandiosity, Realistic Acceptance and Disappointment.<sup>11</sup> The Awareness of God scale “relates to a person’s capacity to be aware of God’s presence and communication.”<sup>12</sup> The factors and sub scales have gone through a number of iterations since the initial conception, but the five factor structure remains the same and the validity of the sub scales have been improved. The original version consisted of 40 items,<sup>13</sup> and it has had as many as 79 items on the scale, but the present version contains 49 and continues under development and refinement.<sup>14</sup> The SAI has shown incremental validity over the SWBS,<sup>15</sup> but a more recent article coauthored by one of the original creators of the SAI indicates that measurement precision is peaked for all 5 sub scales, meaning that one end

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<sup>9</sup> Hall and Edwards, “The Initial Development and Factor Analysis of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory.”

<sup>10</sup> Hall and Edwards, “The Initial Development and Factor Analysis of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory,” 235.

<sup>11</sup> Will Slater, Todd Hall and Keith J. Edwards, “Measuring Religion and Spirituality: Where Are We and Where Are We Going?,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 29, no. 1 (2001): 4-21.

<sup>12</sup> Slater, Hall and Edwards, “Measuring Religion and Spirituality,” 13.

<sup>13</sup> Hall and Edwards, “The Initial Development and Factor Analysis of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory” 239.

<sup>14</sup> Todd W. Hall, Steven P. Reise and Mark G. Haviland, “RESEARCH: An Item Response Theory Analysis of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory,” *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 17, no. 2 (2007): 157-178.

<sup>15</sup> Slater, Hall and Edwards, “Measuring Religion and Spirituality,” 14.

of the scale is precisely measured while the other is not.<sup>16</sup> The authors explain that the dimensions are not “full bipolar continuous trait dimensions” but rather quasi-continuous which impacts scaling and modeling.<sup>17</sup> On the whole, the SAI has many things to commend it, especially with how it views awareness of God in a more contemplative present sense and maturity as indexed by intimacy, but the focus of the instrument overall is on maturity in both its dimensions rather than on well-being or one’s affective experience of God. Moreover, the use of both these instruments in the evaluation of the HSQ indicates that they are not measuring the same thing.

Craig Ellison provides a basis for the conceptualization or theory behind the SWBS in the article, *Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization And Measurement*.<sup>18</sup> Ellison noticed that among the abundance of quality of life measures, the spiritual dimension was often neglected as an aspect of well-being.<sup>19</sup> Following Campbell’s three-factor model focused on the *need for having, relating, and being*, Ellison proposed an additional component he called the need for transcendence, which he defined in this way: “This refers to the sense of well-being that we experience when we find purposes to commit ourselves to which involve ultimate meaning for life. It refers to a non-physical dimension of awareness and experience which can best be termed spiritual.”<sup>20</sup> He based this additional need on the

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<sup>16</sup> Hall, Reise and Haviland, “RESEARCH: An Item Response Theory Analysis of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory,” 157, 174-5.

<sup>17</sup> Hall, Reise and Haviland, “RESEARCH: An Item Response Theory Analysis of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory” 174.

<sup>18</sup> Craig W. Ellison, “Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization and Measurement,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11, no. 4 (1983): 330-340.

<sup>19</sup> Ellison, “Spiritual Well-Being,” 330.

<sup>20</sup> Ellison, “Spiritual Well-Being,” 330.

importance of religion in American society, which also proved to be a more accurate predictor of well-being than previously thought.<sup>21</sup> Ellison also valued the work of David Moberg, whose work in sociology focused in part on including the spiritual dimension in quality of life empirical studies.<sup>22</sup> As the starting point in defining spiritual well-being, he cites the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging's definition: "Spiritual well-being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community, and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness."<sup>23</sup> While Ellison considers the definition imprecise, it leads him to posit two components for spiritual well-being, a vertical (relationship with God) and a horizontal (socio-psychological). So the vertical deals with a person's sense of well-being with God, while the horizontal refers to the person's sense of purpose and life satisfaction irrespective of religion.<sup>24</sup> Ellison moves to argue that these two dimensions integrate and overlap under the influence of the human spirit, indicating that the spiritual dimension does not exist or function apart from the physical.<sup>25</sup> In this way, he avoids a dangerous dualism, and also reflects the Great Commandment of Matt 22:37-40, calling each believer to love both God and neighbor. Spiritual maturity and spiritual health are also distinguished from the experience of well-being. For Ellison, spiritual health is prior to well-being. As for maturity, he sees spiritual well-being as independent of it and that aims at improving one's quality of relationship with God or existential state

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<sup>21</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 331.

<sup>22</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 331, and David O. Moberg, "Subjective Measures of Spiritual Well-Being," *Review of Religious Research* 25, no. 4 (1984): 351-364.

<sup>23</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 331.

<sup>24</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 331.

<sup>25</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 331.

would influence one's spiritual well-being or be a by-product of the development of spiritual maturity.<sup>26</sup> Beyond this, the SWB scale is posited as continuous versus dichotomous.

This theoretical conceptualization formed the basis for the creation of the SWBS. It consists of two sub scales, one for Religious Well-Being (RWB) and one for Existential Well-Being (EWB), combining to form a measurement for Spiritual Well-Being (SWB).<sup>27</sup> The scale itself is composed of 10 questions for each sub scale and a factor analysis validating the measurements being made through the sub scales with all the religious items loading on the RWB and two sub factors of life direction and satisfaction loading on the EWB.<sup>28</sup>

Early testing validated the theorized hypotheses of Ellison in a number of studies detailed in the article under discussion. The SWBS correlated well with self-esteem, developmental background issues, social competence, evangelical belief, intrinsic religious orientation, certain spiritual practices, etc.<sup>29</sup> At the time of the writing of Ellison's article, a number of other studies were being undertaken to further evaluate the usefulness of the instrument. The author concludes his study by suggesting a number of possible research projects, one of which is consistent with the investigation being undertaken here, which is to see if religious practices are associated with spiritual well-being.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 332.

<sup>27</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 332.

<sup>28</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 332.

<sup>29</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 333-35.

<sup>30</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 336.

Since the initial work on the SWBS, the scale has been used in literally 100s of studies.<sup>31</sup> *Norms for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale* discusses numerous studies, which utilized the SWBS among “(a) religious groups, including pastors and seminarians; (b) college students; (c) counseling patients; and (d) others, including sociopathic prison inmates, caregivers for terminally ill hospice patients, and medical outpatients.”<sup>32</sup> While the discussion of norms surfaced a number of great uses of the scale, affirmed its predictability in hypotheses, it also surfaced the issue of a ceiling effect.<sup>33</sup> While what one would anticipate with regard to the scoring on the scale from the groups listed was borne out, those samples that included strong religious affiliation scored higher on both sub scales. Evangelicals regularly scored at the upper end producing a limit to the discrimination the scale provides for those of this orientation, which demonstrates the ceiling effect.<sup>34</sup> This leads the author to conclude that the instrument does not distinguish well among those who are functioning at the highest level of well-being.<sup>35</sup> However, the article also indicated that the instrument does distinguish well within populations noting that SWBS which differ by 5 points are significant and RWB as well as EWB scores that differ by 3 points are significant, assuming sample sizes are larger than 25.<sup>36</sup> The authors

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<sup>31</sup> Mark Cobb, Christina Puchalski and Bruce Rumbold, “Spiritual Well-Being Scale: Mental and Physical Health Relationships,” in *Spirituality in Healthcare*, auth. Raymond F. Paloutzian, R. K. Bufford and A. J. Wildman (pre-published version, 2011), 2.

<sup>32</sup> R. K. Bufford, R. F. Paloutzian and C. W. Ellison, “Norms for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 19, no. 1 (1991): 56-70.

<sup>33</sup> Bufford, Paloutzian and Ellison, “Norms for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale,” 64.

<sup>34</sup> Bufford, Paloutzian and Ellison, “Norms for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale,” 64-65.

<sup>35</sup> Bufford, Paloutzian and Ellison, “Norms for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale,” 66.

<sup>36</sup> Bufford, Paloutzian and Ellison, “Norms for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale,” 64.

also suggest adding items to the scale that discriminate well among highly religious samples might help.<sup>37</sup>

*Toward an Integrative Measure of Health and Well-Being* posits more strongly that the human spirit is the integrative force for body and soul in an attempt to examine measures of well-being and the influence of religion.<sup>38</sup> Further it cites numerous empirical studies that show the influence of religion on well-being and calls for researchers not to ignore the importance of “religion when forming and testing causal models of subjective well-being.”<sup>39</sup> Ellison and Smith briefly review the existing instruments on religious assessment pointing to the fact that they mostly relate to cognition, while noting another that is perhaps the most researched, the Religion Orientation Survey,<sup>40</sup> which focuses on the interiority of religious commitment, not well-being.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, it is noted that only two instruments exist that focus on spiritual well-being, and pointed to one by Moberg, which has generally focused on the elderly and in healthcare.<sup>42</sup> It is also a multi-dimensional conceptualization of well-

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<sup>37</sup> Bufford, Paloutzian and Ellison, “Norms for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale,” 66.

<sup>38</sup> Craig W. Ellison and Joel Smith, “Toward An Integrative Measure of Health and Well-Being,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 19, no. 1 (1991): 35-45.

<sup>39</sup> Ellison and Smith, “Toward An Integrative Measure of Health and Well-Being,” 37.

<sup>40</sup> G. W. Allport and J. M. Ross, “Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice,” *Journal of personality and social psychology* 5, no. 4 (1967): 432-43. This study has been used in a wide variety of settings, but soon after it appeared, it was both questioned and considered controversial. As such some think that the “measures do not reflect the content of the constructs very well” making ROS less reliable than indicated (Slater, Hall and Edwards, “Measuring Religion and Spirituality: Where Are We and Where Are We Going?,” 4). However, it has been determined in other studies that “intrinsic religious orientation” correlates positively with well-being (Ellison, “Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization and Measurement,” 334).

<sup>41</sup> Ellison and Smith, “Toward An Integrative Measure of Health and Well-Being,” 37.

<sup>42</sup> Ellison and Smith, “Toward An Integrative Measure of Health and Well-Being,” 37.

being.<sup>43</sup> There is no indication in the literature that Moberg's instrument has been widely employed. The second instrument is the SWBS, which at the time of the article's writing had had over 300 requests to use the instrument in research. The SWBS has correlated positively regarding physical well-being, adjustment to physical illness, healthcare environments regarding attitudes of staff, psychological well-being, relational well-being, and religious well-being.<sup>44</sup> As such, the SWBS has proven to have a wide range of applications with satisfactory results. This review of research also mentioned the ceiling effect and further research is encouraged looking at a broader range of religious belief.<sup>45</sup> Also the results in several studies on marriages have been mixed or inconclusive possibly due to the ceiling effect as the studies were done with conservative religious samples.<sup>46</sup>

Ledbetter et al. discuss the ceiling effect in their article, *An Evaluation of the Research and Clinical Usefulness of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale*.<sup>47</sup> The focus of this study was on the existence of ceiling effects among highly conservative religious populations. The results revealed that among such populations a ceiling effect does indeed exist reducing the variability of the scoring at the upper end.<sup>48</sup> The distributions were highly non-normal for these kinds of populations. At the same time the authors recognized the SWBS has the ability to discriminate well at the lower end of the

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<sup>43</sup> Moberg, "Subjective Measures of Spiritual Well-Being," 355-356. Moberg's survey elements are delineated here.

<sup>44</sup> Ellison and Smith, "Toward An Integrative Measure of Health and Well-Being," 40.

<sup>45</sup> Ellison and Smith, "Toward An Integrative Measure of Health and Well-Being," 41.

<sup>46</sup> Ellison and Smith, "Toward An Integrative Measure of Health and Well-Being," 40.

<sup>47</sup> Mark F. Ledbetter and others, "An Evaluation of the Research and Clinical Usefulness of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 19, no. 1 (1991): 49-55.

<sup>48</sup> Ledbetter and others, "An Evaluation of the Research and Clinical Usefulness of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale," 54.

spectrum. The researchers close with a call for a revision of the SWBS that would allow better discrimination of the upper end by revising existing items, adding items or changing the scoring procedure.<sup>49</sup>

In the process of research two dissertations were discovered that attempted to correct the ceiling effects of the SWBS. One by Kelly, entitled, *A Revision of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale*<sup>50</sup> attempted to substitute and reword items on the scale. The substitutions were determined by other spiritual well-being researchers to be essential. The implemented instrument for the study contained the original and revised SWBS as well as the Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale as a check. The results of the study of 399 Catholic Sisters in the United States indicated that the revision only produced a slightly more normal distribution, but the measures of central tendency remained practically the same. The other issue concerned the revised scale as producing 3 factors instead of two. The author maintained that the SWBS is good for general use and more revision is needed to improve its use in highly religious populations. The other dissertation, *A Revision of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ceiling Effects)*,<sup>51</sup> posits a revision that includes spiritual disciplines, which would countermand or confound the correlation undertaken in this thesis. That being said, the author states: "The purpose of this study was to show that spiritual disciplines are an essential part of spiritual health. Thus, the

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<sup>49</sup> Ledbetter and others, "An Evaluation of the Research and Clinical Usefulness of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale," 55.

<sup>50</sup> Mary Kathryn Kelly, "A revision of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale" (PhD Dissertation, 1993). The information cited here is from the abstract for the dissertation, but it comports with the research previously cited by the other works. The reason for its inclusion here is because it is an attempt at a revision of the SWBS for a highly religious population.

<sup>51</sup> Peter David Endyke, "A Revision of the Spiritual Well-being Scale. (ceiling effects)" (PhD Dissertation, 1999). Information cited is cited from the abstract for the dissertation in this paragraph.



inclusion of aspects of the spiritual disciplines in the Spiritual Well-being Scale would: (1) reduce the ceiling effects of the scale, (2) increase the variability of the scale, and (3) improve the validity of the scale.” While the study mentions that the inclusion of spiritual disciplines did allay the ceiling effects of the SWBS significantly, increasing the variability of the scale and retaining the two-factor basis, at the same time the theoretical conceptualization of Ellison behind the instrument was changed. Ellison in his article on the conceptualization of the instrument explicitly states that spiritual well-being is not the same as spiritual health but it is an expression of it.<sup>52</sup> For these reasons, the revisions suggested by these two dissertations are not considered sufficiently revised from the original scale to employ in the study undertaken here.

Wong-McDonald and Gorusch conducted a study recently that utilized the SWBS among a highly religious population to discern how the concept of God, religious motivation, coping and the locus of control related to spiritual well-being. The study was appropriately titled: *A Multivariate Theory of God Concept, Religious Motivation, Locus of Control, Coping, and Spiritual Well-Being*.<sup>53</sup> The authors state that the “significant dimensions are knowledge of God (God concepts), relationship with God (motivation), locus of control, and problem-solving style (religious coping)” as compared to the experience of life (defined as well-being).<sup>54</sup> They describe the model and its theoretical basis and then test it among 57 male and 94 female (N=161) undergraduates from

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<sup>52</sup> Ellison, “Spiritual Well-Being,” 332.

<sup>53</sup> Ana Wong-McDonald and Richard L. Gorsuch, “A Multivariate Theory of God Concept, Religious Motivation, Locus of Control, Coping, and Spiritual Well-Being,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 32, no. 4 (2004): 318-334.

<sup>54</sup> Wong-McDonald and Gorsuch, “A Multivariate Theory of God Concept, Religious Motivation, Locus of Control, Coping, and Spiritual Well-Being,” 319.

Christian colleges and churches, all of whom professed that Jesus is the “Son of the living God” and attend church at least once a week.<sup>55</sup> The correlations with the SWBS supported the hypothesis for this highly religious group, and the conclusion was “[T]he tendency for self-reliance, to act independently from God, is related to a lesser sense of well-being as humans were created to live dependently on God.”<sup>56</sup> The significance for the study being considered here is that ceiling effect in highly religious populations may have a mitigating factor in the subject under study for the correlation. In this study, it had to do with how a theological construct impacted well-being and their hypotheses were more or less confirmed.

With regard to the SWBS a number of other studies have been undertaken since the discovery of the ceiling effect, and as Slater, Hall and Edwards indicate, they did not report investigating ceiling effects.<sup>57</sup> However, the fact that they did not report investigating them does not mean that they were implicitly present either, yet it is important to agree with the authors of *Measuring Religion and Spirituality: Where are We and Where are We Going?* that they should be transparent with regard to the presence of such effects. Slater, et al. also indicates that the factor analysis for the SWBS has been challenged, but found inconclusive therefore justifying the continued use of the two-factor basis for the scale.<sup>58</sup> The authors’ purpose is to critique the two existing and widely used instruments of religion and spirituality, the SWBS and Quest measures, and

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<sup>55</sup> Wong-McDonald and Gorsuch, “A Multivariate Theory of God Concept, Religious Motivation, Locus of Control, Coping, and Spiritual Well-Being,” 325.

<sup>56</sup> Wong-McDonald and Gorsuch, “A Multivariate Theory of God Concept, Religious Motivation, Locus of Control, Coping, and Spiritual Well-Being,” 332.

<sup>57</sup> Slater, Hall and Edwards, “Measuring Religion and Spirituality,” 4.

<sup>58</sup> Slater, Hall and Edwards, “Measuring Religion and Spirituality,” 12.

then pursue a review of the more recently developed measures, such as the Faith Maturity Scale (FMS), Spiritual Assessment Inventory (which two of the authors helped develop),<sup>59</sup> and the Religious Fundamentalism Scale (RFS), and the Spiritual Transcendence Scale (STS). They consider the complicating factors in the development and use of the instruments citing definitional imprecision, bias, ceiling effects, social desirability, and illusory spiritual health. The development of the newer measures has both been rigorous and thorough, but none of them are without problems.

Basset, et al. in *Measuring Christian Maturity: A Comparison of Several Scales*, also looked at measures of spiritual maturity.<sup>60</sup> They compared a number of instruments including the SWBS: the Christian Lifestyle Scale, the Spiritual Leadership Qualities Inventory, the Religious Status Interview, the Spiritual Maturity Index, the Lifestyle Inventory, and the Shepherd Scale. A couple of interesting things are worthy of note. First, most of the scales used reflected a bias that differentiated Catholics from Protestants. However, the SWBS and its EWB sub scale were the only scales that did not reflect that bias. The authors posit that the bias may be explained by the fact Protestants developed the scales inadvertently creating the issue. This writer is inclined to think that something more fundamental is in play and may suggest that spirituality is not independent of a person's intrinsic conception of God and therefore may suggest something regarding their spiritual formation rather than reflect bias, especially since the RWB sub scale was not independent of the bias. Second, it raised the question as to

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<sup>59</sup> Hall and Edwards, "The Initial Development and Factor Analysis of the Spiritual Assessment Inventory," 233-246.

<sup>60</sup> Rodney L. Bassett *and others*, "Measuring Christian Maturity: A Comparison of Several Scales," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 19, no. 1 (1991): 84-95.

whether the SWBS was independent of growth (maturity).<sup>61</sup> The authors offer a possible explanation in that the sample was not broad regarding age.<sup>62</sup>

While a number of other religious/spiritual psychometric instruments are mentioned in this discussion of SWBS, none have been extensively reported upon in the literature, with the possible exception of the Quest, but it suffers from the same issues as the Religious Orientation Survey as noted in Slater's article. For the ones mentioned here, none had more than 10 articles concerning their development and use based on a quick search of the religious and psychological databases at EBSCOhost permitted by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's subscription.<sup>63</sup> Due to the extensive use of the SWBS, even to validate the integrity of other instruments mentioned or described, and its brevity for the missionary environment, it makes sense to employ the scale in the current study. It appears to be more focused on the experience of God by the individual rather than other issues.

#### Perceived Ministry Effectiveness

Probably the most difficult portion of the hypothesis to find theoretical basis for in the literature relates to the person's perception of ministry effectiveness as related to their spiritual formation practices. For the most part, the relationship between spiritual formation and perceived effectiveness in ministry has been more assumed than demonstrated by empirical studies. More specifically, spiritual life and formation has

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<sup>61</sup> Bassett *and others*, "Measuring Christian Maturity," 88.

<sup>62</sup> Bassett *and others*, "Measuring Christian Maturity," 88.

<sup>63</sup> This search included other items from journal articles not discussed in this review. The instruments searched generally focused on spiritual maturity or some other aspect other than well-being, since the vast majority of instruments focus on cognition. These were the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI), Holy Spirit Questionnaire (HSQ).

been related to attrition in the mission's world, with little attention given to the effectiveness in and the satisfaction derived from ministry for the missionary.

Andrew Murray, in *The Missionary Problem is a Personal Problem*,<sup>64</sup> points to the issue of effectiveness through the lens of devotional life to Christ. His thesis is that a person, the missionary, must first be practiced in loving and being devoted to Christ: "They who would know it in its power, and in power to proclaim and convey it to others, must keep in contact with the love of Christ. They must know it in its intensity, and know what it is to continue in it till their whole being realized that love can reach all, and melt all. It can make even the coldest and weakest child of God a lover and seeker of souls."<sup>65</sup> So Murray, who also wrote on prayer (*With Christ in the School of Prayer*), sees as critical to missionary effectiveness one's devotional life to Christ. However, there is little here other than a motivational push toward staying intimate with Christ, although the testimony of Christian history would support his claim.

In missionary literature, retention is related to perceived ministry effectiveness, and while not directly associating it with spiritual practices, the overall tone of ReMAP II, entitled *Worth Keeping: Global Perspectives on Good Practice in Missionary Retention*,<sup>66</sup> is that spiritual maturity and formation are factors in it as seen through the lens of retention.<sup>67</sup> Thus it appears that spiritual formation and perceived ministry

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<sup>64</sup> Andrew Murray, "The Missionary Problem is a Personal One," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Steven C. Hawthorne and Ralph D. Winter (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981).

<sup>65</sup> Murray, "The Missionary Problem is a Personal One," 832.

<sup>66</sup> Rob Hay and others, *Worth Keeping: Global Perspectives on Good Practice in Missionary Retention* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2007), <http://www.worldevangelicalalliance.com/resources/view.htm?id=152>, 338.

<sup>67</sup> Hay and others, *Worth Keeping* 143.

effectiveness are related from this work. ReMAP I, *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*,<sup>68</sup> neglects the category of ministry outcomes or effectiveness as impacting attrition.

Leslie Andrews reported on the association of spiritual life practices and ministry satisfaction in her article, *Spiritual, Family, And Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries*,<sup>69</sup> For the purposes of her study, “family life, vocational ministry, and spiritual life were adopted as the critical factors interacting with one another and subsequently contributing to a missionary’s overall life satisfaction.”<sup>70</sup> Andrews is explicit in her definition of spiritual formation, quoting Mulholland, “a process of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ for the sake of others” and in her concept of spiritual disciplines as “regular habit patterns that result in an intimate relationship with God” which are “activities of mind and body purposefully undertaken, to bring our personality and total being into effective cooperation with the divine order” and to “give room for God to work in our lives.”<sup>71</sup> She surveyed 245 missionaries, 127 MK adolescents and 140 MK children, all of whom were on home assignment no more than 15 months, most of which had field experience, all from 8 Evangelical sending agencies (some independents were included).<sup>72</sup> All were from the U.S. or Canada, married on

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<sup>68</sup> William David Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1997).

<sup>69</sup> Leslie A. Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 27, no. 3 (1999): 107-118.

<sup>70</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 107.

<sup>71</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 107, while citing Coppedge, 1989, p. 66; Willard, 1988, p. 86; and Wardle, 1998, 263.

<sup>72</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 108.

average for 18 years, with a mean age of 43, most were college educated and had served at least 12 years.<sup>73</sup> Thus studying a sample very similar to the one proposed within this thesis. Her instruments were the Missionary Family Profile (MFP), Family of Origin Image (FOI), and Spiritual Life Inventory, Family Adaptability and Cohesions Scales (FACES II), Enriching and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication and Happiness (ENRICH), Family Satisfaction (FL-S), MK-Youth Family Survey, and (SLI), which was a researcher-designed survey with attention to specific spiritual disciplines, supporting relationships, and other intervening factors that focus on responsiveness to God.<sup>74</sup> All but three (ENRICH, FACES II, FL-S) of the instruments were researcher-designed. In reporting her results, she notes that the strongest correlations in order were “(a) ministry and missionary satisfaction, (b) family life and spiritual life satisfaction, (c) missionary and spiritual life satisfaction, and (d) ministry and spiritual life satisfaction.”<sup>75</sup> Speaking in reference to the spiritual disciplines of personal devotions, Scripture, prayer, solitude, spiritual friend, vocational call and forgiveness, the author noted they correlated well with spiritual life satisfaction.<sup>76</sup> Andrews goes on to note “That is, the more satisfied a missionary was with his or her spiritual life, the more likely he or she was to be satisfied with family life, and vice versa.”<sup>77</sup> As the study relates to ministry satisfaction (a near idea to perceived ministry effectiveness) Andrews states, “[b]oth ministry and missionary satisfaction correlated significantly and positively with spiritual life

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<sup>73</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 109.

<sup>74</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 109.

<sup>75</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 110.

<sup>76</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 110.

<sup>77</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 112.

satisfaction.”<sup>78</sup> Andrews closes her study with this statement: “Though practice of the disciplines does not produce satisfaction, it does position an individual in a posture of openness to receive God’s life-giving grace as it freely flows toward the person. That grace in turn manifests itself in more wholesome family relationships and enhanced ministry satisfaction.”<sup>79</sup>

While Andrews did not utilize the SWBS in her study and designed many of her own instruments, her results are encouraging to the design and motivations behind the study being undertaken here.

Trimble undertook a study of issues related to retention and satisfaction of missionaries reported in *Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention of Missionaries*.<sup>80</sup> His explicit purpose was to examine tenure (retention), but also included a job satisfaction component that is of interest since that is closely associated with effectiveness. Trimble explains his concerns were for the younger generations and their organizational assimilation amidst cross-cultural adjustment issues. His study was undertaken in the context of WEC (World Evangelization for Christ) and included 468 missionaries, which reflected a 28% response rate with the surveys. It recognizes that organizational commitment follows norms for older generations once the younger missionaries’ career is in the established phase.<sup>81</sup> One of the reasons for the

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<sup>78</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 114.

<sup>79</sup> Andrews, “Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 117.

<sup>80</sup> Douglas E. Trimble, “Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention of Missionaries,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 34, no. 4 (2006): 349-360.

<sup>81</sup> Trimble, “Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention of Missionaries,” 350.



study was the assumption that job satisfaction would increase tenure.<sup>82</sup> He concludes that tenure is the strongest predictor for job satisfaction and that organizational commitment plays the mediating role between job satisfaction and tenure directing him to encourage organizations to pay attention to the satisfaction of their personnel in the ministry in which they are serving.<sup>83</sup> This is an interesting conclusion, but it also emphasizes that job satisfaction (ministry satisfaction/effectiveness) is important, thus encouraging the investigation here as to whether spiritual practices influence perceived ministry effectiveness/satisfaction.

Barnett, et al. conducted a study that looked at psychological and spiritual components of effectiveness and reported the results in an article titled, *Psychological and Spiritual Predictors of Domains of Functioning and Effectiveness of Short-Term Missionaries*.<sup>84</sup> While the study was conducted on short-term missionaries, the results provide insight. The study was done on undergraduates from a small Christian College and all of which chose to intern in a foreign country for a minimum of 6 weeks.<sup>85</sup> The study lasted 2 years, totaled 42 students, two of which dropped out from the program, leaving 8 from the first year and 32 from the second and they interned in 25 different countries on 5 continents and in different ministries.<sup>86</sup> The authors employed three

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<sup>82</sup> Trimble, "Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention of Missionaries," 351.

<sup>83</sup> Trimble, "Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention of Missionaries," 359.

<sup>84</sup> Keri L. Barnett, Keith J. Edwards and Elizabeth Lewis Hall, "Psychological and Spiritual Predictors of Domains of Functioning and Effectiveness of Short-Term Missionaries," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 33, no. 1 (2005): 27-40.

<sup>85</sup> Barnett, Edwards and Hall, "Psychological and Spiritual Predictors of Domains of Functioning and Effectiveness of Short-Term Missionaries," 29.

<sup>86</sup> Barnett, Edwards and Hall, "Psychological and Spiritual Predictors of Domains of Functioning and

instruments MMPI-2, AORI and SAI (both based on object relations theory), all completed a month prior to departure for the field and after they returned they completed the Internship Questionnaire and their on-site leader completed the Supervisor Questionnaire. There were modest changes to the testing due to circumstances noted for the second group. For both the Internship and Supervisor Questionnaires, a factor analysis was made so that the necessary correlations could be attempted.<sup>87</sup> In the discussion she reports that performance of the missionary is a “complex construct that is composed of multiple different factors,”<sup>88</sup> yet the hypotheses were affirmed in this study. The Disappointment with God scale of the SAI correlated with a lesser capacity to work independently (need supervision) and the Awareness of God scale indicated better working relationships.<sup>89</sup> As to the role spiritual factors play, the authors state: “[t]his vulnerability also shows up in the spiritual domain in that missionaries who exhibit lower levels of spiritual development are also more prone to having difficulties while overseas.”<sup>90</sup> Overall the study validates the connection of the spiritual domain on psychological health indicating that “the quality of one’s relationship with God, based on object relations theory, and awareness of God are associated with effective performance on the mission field.”<sup>91</sup> The authors note that due to the small sample, the results can’t be

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Effectiveness of Short-Term Missionaries,” 30.

<sup>87</sup> Barnett, Edwards and Hall, “Psychological and Spiritual Predictors of Domains of Functioning and Effectiveness of Short-Term Missionaries,” 32.

<sup>88</sup> Barnett, Edwards and Hall, “Psychological and Spiritual Predictors of Domains of Functioning and Effectiveness of Short-Term Missionaries,” 36.

<sup>89</sup> Barnett, Edwards and Hall, “Psychological and Spiritual Predictors of Domains of Functioning and Effectiveness of Short-Term Missionaries,” 35-36.

<sup>90</sup> Barnett, Edwards and Hall, “Psychological and Spiritual Predictors of Domains of Functioning and Effectiveness of Short-Term Missionaries,” 37.

extrapolated for a larger group nor can they be applied to long-term missionaries, but they do lend credibility toward investigating the relationship between spiritual formation practices and perceived ministry effectiveness.

One final study concerning the relationship of spiritual development to psychological factors and the adjustment of missionaries was done by two of the authors who developed the SAI. They reported their findings in *The Role of Spiritual and Psychological Development in the Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Missionaries*.<sup>92</sup> While the hypotheses they proposed were confirmed, and a definite relationship exists between spiritual development and psychological development in the role of sociocultural cross-cultural adjustment among missionaries, issues appeared to surface with the SAI scale in its ability to discriminate at the higher end as the sociocultural cross-cultural adjustment correlation was considered weak, especially since the theoretical basis for the connection is strong.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, the study showed an inverse on the Awareness of God sub scale that the authors considered puzzling: psychological symptoms were high for those who had the highest Awareness of God.<sup>94</sup> As reported in another study discussed previously, this may be evidence of peaking and the inability to discriminate at one end of the scale. Even though the study did not directly address perceived ministry effectiveness and the

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<sup>91</sup> Barnett, Edwards and Hall, "Psychological and Spiritual Predictors of Domains of Functioning and Effectiveness of Short-Term Missionaries," 37.

<sup>92</sup> M. Elizabeth Lewis Hall, Keith J. Edwards and Todd W. Hall, "The Role of Spiritual and Psychological Development in the Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Missionaries," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 9, no. 2 (2006): 193-208.

<sup>93</sup> Hall, Edwards and Hall, "The Role of Spiritual and Psychological Development in the Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Missionaries," 202-7.

<sup>94</sup> Hall, Edwards and Hall, "The Role of Spiritual and Psychological Development in the Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Missionaries," 207.

interplay of spiritual life, it does make and validate the connection between psychological and spiritual influences in development of missionaries.

The best literature that can be found points to a connection between spiritual life and perceived ministry effectiveness and satisfaction, which should encourage more study. While two of the four studies equated cross-cultural adjustment with effectiveness, the qualities needed to be and remain effective are apparent in the reports of their findings. In the other publications noted, a connection is vaguely made by the spiritual life and practices being strongly emphasized. It appears that Hall, et al. was surprised when they did their study to find that more studies making this connection were not available.<sup>95</sup>

#### Missionary Attrition

The last portion of this hypothesis concerns missionary attrition as it relates to the practices of spiritual formation. As with the last section, there is a paucity of literature that exists relating missionary attrition to the spiritual disciplines. There are a number of works that indicate a relationship between the endurance of the missionary on the field and spiritual life. The bulk of this work has been done by the World Evangelical Alliance over the past 20 years.

ReMAP I<sup>96</sup> was a study of missionary attrition done in the mid-90s and was turned into the book *Too Valuable to Lose*. The study included participation from 14 countries, 6 from old sending countries (OSC) and 8 from new sending countries (NSC). A list of 26 reasons for attrition from the field was broken down into 8 major groups and the

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<sup>95</sup> Hall, Edwards and Hall, "The Role of Spiritual and Psychological Development in the Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Missionaries," 193-4.

<sup>96</sup> ReMAP is short for Reducing Missionary Attrition Project.

instrument employed is included in the appendix.<sup>97</sup> The goal was to analyze the reasons for a 5.1% annual attrition rate from mission agencies. The questionnaire was designed by an expert commission and based on a listing of 26 major reasons for missionary departure. The study recognized that some attrition cannot be prevented like normal retirement, political crisis, a marriage outside the mission, death, etc.<sup>98</sup> Also the number of missionaries serving in their first term was not asked on the instrument. According to the numbers, and in general, all older sending countries experienced a higher attrition rate of 5.6% compared to 4.1% for new sending countries; however, a greater number of missionaries returning to older sending countries do so for unpreventable reasons. Taking this into account the overall preventable annual attrition runs at 4% for older sending countries and 3.4% for the newer.<sup>99</sup> Half of the attrition experienced results from unpreventable and personal reasons.<sup>100</sup> The other half results from marriage, family or societal reasons and work-related, team, or cultural reasons.<sup>101</sup> The survey included both quantitative and qualitative questions and not every mission sending agency in every included country completed the questionnaire.<sup>102</sup> Sophisticated analysis of the data was not carried out due to the complexities of the data and other issues.<sup>103</sup> Overall the issue of attrition is handled from the perspective of the agency and how it can help. However,

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<sup>97</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 85.

<sup>98</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 86.

<sup>99</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 86.

<sup>100</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 91.

<sup>101</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 91.

<sup>102</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 96.

<sup>103</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 96.

when all is said and done, the top 3 reasons for missionary attrition cited in this study are “a clear call” to the field, “a supportive family,” and “a healthy spirituality.”<sup>104</sup>

Throughout the book references to the need for the encouragement of or training in spiritual formation is maintained,<sup>105</sup> and it even mentions specific disciplines and spiritual direction, but the study does not address the direct relationship of spiritual formation to attrition among missionaries. It only assumes it. One of the great discoveries in the study was the strength of this need.

The more recent investigation of attrition in missions is ReMAP II, which is the follow up to the previous study and focuses on retention as it is a look at best agency practices to that end.<sup>106</sup> This time the survey work was done in 22 countries, both old and new, with representative countries selected from each continent.<sup>107</sup> An eight-page questionnaire of 98 items after extensive review were sent out to the participating agencies resulting in 600 agency data sets representing 40,000 long-term cross-cultural missionaries.<sup>108</sup> From that data, the study developed retention rates that allowed them to discern best practices regarding retention.<sup>109</sup> Returning missionaries were classified into three categories, unpreventable, preventable, and harmonious transfer (change of agency, not field).<sup>110</sup> Key findings included retention associated with agency practices, that it was

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<sup>104</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 99.

<sup>105</sup> Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 235.

<sup>106</sup> Hay and others, *Worth Keeping*, 13. The cited version throughout this thesis is from the WEA resource web site.

<sup>107</sup> Hay and others, *Worth Keeping*, 32.

<sup>108</sup> Hay and others, *Worth Keeping*, 37.

<sup>109</sup> Hay and others, *Worth Keeping*, 37.

<sup>110</sup> Hay and others, *Worth Keeping*, 38.

a complex web of factors, high retaining agencies experienced no decrease in personnel, and best practices applied to agencies could substantially reduce preventable attrition as well as possibly unpreventable.<sup>111</sup> While a number of categories and their influence on retention were delineated in the book, the surprising discovery was that “[q]uestions on spiritual life were rated highest of all groups of questions in both OSC and NSC and in OSC they show a clear correlation to retention. The testing of the maturity of a candidates spiritual life and the emphasis on the maintenance and growth of that spiritual life, are rated highly and correlate with retention. A culture of prayer throughout the mission agency (shown in regular prayer for the missionaries) is valued highly and in OSC is clearly correlated to retention [sic].”<sup>112</sup> So with regard to the spiritual life, ReMAP II as described in *Worth Keeping*, makes the clear connection with retention, indicating that the current study has warrant.

Two dissertations were discovered that deserve brief discussion. Unndis Bergaas’s dissertation, entitled, *The Relationship of Spirituality to Burnout and Coping among Norwegian Missionaries*, examined the influence spiritual disciplines had on 240 Norwegian missionaries serving in 30 countries. His hypothesis was that “missionaries who are more mature spiritually will experience less burnout and use better coping strategies when dealing with stressful situations.”<sup>113</sup> He utilized these instruments in his study: “Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI), the Spiritual Life Scale (SLS), the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ), the Religious Problem Solving Scale (RPSS), and the

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<sup>111</sup> Hay and others, *Worth Keeping*, 40.

<sup>112</sup> Hay and others, *Worth Keeping*, 143.

<sup>113</sup> Unndis Bergaas, “The Relationship of Spirituality to Burnout and Coping among Norwegian Missionaries” (Ph.D., Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University, 2002), only the abstract was consulted for this literature review.

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).”<sup>114</sup> He also designed an instrument that would control stress for this study. The results showed that “[m]issionaries who scored higher on spiritual maturity and spiritual support, reported significantly lower levels of burnout.” The study notes that stress was the most powerful predictor of burnout, but that clearly spiritual maturity and spiritual support were significant predictors as well.

It was not possible to access the other dissertation by Jaen Chong, *Preventing Missionary Attrition Through Spiritual Formation*,<sup>115</sup> physically or find an abstract, but it was possible to find a brief review of it in the dissertation of Richard P. Gilbertson,<sup>116</sup> who was working on developing a training program along the lines of the Great Commandment for cultivating spiritual formation practices in missionaries of his organization. As he commented, Jaen Chong’s work on abating missionary attrition through spiritual formation was primarily theoretical and did not provide a clear roadmap for how the implementation of spiritual disciplines would influence retention. Moreover she did not include any empirical evidence or case studies of the spiritual disciplines demonstrating their impact. She concludes simply with a call to develop missionary candidates along those lines. As such, her work appears to have little bearing on the study being undertaken here.

Nanette Swick in her article, *The Survival of the Fittest*, notes ten reasons why missionaries are able to persevere. She has been serving in Spain, which has a high

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<sup>114</sup> Bergaas, “The Relationship of Spirituality to Burnout and Coping among Norwegian Missionaries,” Abstract.

<sup>115</sup> Jaen Chong, “Preventing Missionary Attrition through Spiritual Formation” (D. Miss. Thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003).

<sup>116</sup> Richard P. Gilbertson, “Toward a Great Commandment Based Spirituality for Missionary Candidates: Accomplice for the Journey” (Doctor of Ministry Thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2010), 92.



missionary attrition rate, with her husband since 1992. In 1998 she had the opportunity hear a panel discuss survival as a missionary. Among the reasons stated, she listed the following: “We must have a strong, personal walk with God. Prayer, dependence on God's word, openness to the Holy Spirit's teaching and guidance, and worship were vital for each missionary on the panel. In missions as in all walks of Christian life, the basics are what see us through and make us grow. There are no golden keys, no brilliant new methodologies — just bedrock trust in God's love and clean, close relationships with him and his people.”<sup>117</sup>

As the forgoing indicates, a clear relationship exists, but a direct connection has never been empirically attempted, indicating the need for the present study.

### **Components of Spiritual Formation**

Having concluded the literature review for the structure of the hypotheses, it is necessary to turn to the publications that complete the thinking regarding creating an environment for contagious Kingdom expansion. This includes works on the disciplines, considerations in psychology, the source of obedience and the Kingdom environment. The works considered here, as with the previous sections of this are considered as representative, not an exhaustive review.

#### **Spiritual Disciplines**

Richard Foster burst onto the scene among evangelicals in the late 1970s with a controversial book at the time, *Celebration of Discipline*.<sup>118</sup> He was at the time a leader in a movement that had not completely formed then, but has taken greater shape over the

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<sup>117</sup> Nanette Swick, “Survival of the Fittest,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (2001): 32-37.

<sup>118</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978).

past 30 years. Foster organizes certain disciplines (he calls them “classical” and his list is not exhaustive as will be seen) as inward: meditation, prayer, fasting, study; outward: simplicity, solitude, submission, service; and corporate: confession, worship, guidance, celebration. He indicates the purpose is inner transformation and freedom as they open one up to the grace of God for transformation and that transformation cannot take place by force of will.<sup>119</sup> He describes each of the disciplines included and ways to practice them. Foster appears to be open to a very dynamic presence of God in the way he elucidates the disciplines. This is particularly clear in contrast to Donald S. Whitney with regard to meditation, where for Foster that discipline opens one to greater awareness of God and to hear God’s voice.<sup>120</sup> Foster is holistic as it touches the human person in his approach to the disciplines as they are for inward transformation leading to outward expressions of godliness.

Willard, in *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*, does a magnificent job explaining the philosophy behind the disciplines with a strong reference to including their influence on the body<sup>121</sup> and behavior (transformation). He, like Foster, sees the disciplines as opening one to the grace of God so that the believer can do what he could not do in his own power. He argues that people must imitate the lifestyle of Christ if they are to enjoy the rich life of God’s Kingdom. Further, Willard believes that one can, through the disciplines, learn to live in the Kingdom, experiencing

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<sup>119</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 4.

<sup>120</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 18-19.

<sup>121</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988), 52, 75-93.

God, who is an ongoing presence and at the same time a psychological reality.<sup>122</sup> Willard continues with a review of the disciplines throughout history and their accompanying extremes, driving the person for balance in both the contemplative and active traditions as expressed in contemporary society versus isolation.<sup>123</sup> Dallas has a strong accent on the experience of God's person and presence as a reality to be had and trained through the disciplines and that their impact over time is so strong that "[o]bedience is the natural outflow of the experienced faith and love."<sup>124</sup> For Willard the disciplines are "only activities undertaken to make us capable of receiving more of His life and power without harm to ourselves or others,"<sup>125</sup> which echoes "activities constituting the disciplines *have no value in themselves*. The aim and substance of the spiritual life is not fasting, prayer, hymn singing, frugal living and so forth. Rather, it is the effective and full enjoyment of active love of God and humankind in all the daily rounds of normal existence where we are placed."<sup>126</sup> The Spirit as the main actor in the disciplines seems to undergird the philosophy of the book, as God is an experienced psychological reality in transformation. Willard organizes the disciplines as following either abstinence and engagement (apophatic / kataphatic?) and his list differs from Fosters in that frugality, chastity, silence, secrecy and fellowship are added and meditation is missing.<sup>127</sup> All this shows is that the lists in the books are not exhaustive.

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<sup>122</sup> Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, xi, 20.

<sup>123</sup> Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 130-154.

<sup>124</sup> Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 154.

<sup>125</sup> Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 156.

<sup>126</sup> Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 138.

<sup>127</sup> Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 158.

Whitney has a more conservative evangelical take on the disciplines in *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, but brings some valuable insight as well as a subtly different list of spiritual practices.<sup>128</sup> Initially he speaks to the need of the disciplines, but while his approach is very practical, there is a rigidity and restraint. It is clear that he shies away from the influence of Catholic and Orthodox understandings of prayer and contemplation and the associated mysticism. He does, however, leave room for an interactive “voice” of God<sup>129</sup> and sees the purpose of the disciplines as godliness, which to this author appears to emphasize outward behavior and smacks of moralism. Inner transformation may be implicit in his writing, but it is not near as openly discussed as in Willard and Foster’s work. Whitney presents each discipline in a very biblical way and then discusses the applicational range for the practice so as to help the reader. His list varies from the others, but as with Foster, he includes at times others in the same topic. The list in the book includes Bible (reading and memorizing as separate, with the inclusion of meditation), prayer, worship, evangelism (unique in this list in comparison to the others but necessary), serving, fasting, Silence and Solitude (Foster does this too), journaling and learning. Again Whitney’s list points to the fact that any list of the disciplines is not sacred. In a sense, Whitney’s focus that the result of the disciplines will be godliness is good, but the actual import of the disciplines, in this author’s opinion, is increasing one’s awareness of God’s presence and activity over time, resulting in transformation. Their significance is in heightening our consciousness of God’s loving presence, much like Willard.

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<sup>128</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991).

<sup>129</sup> Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 178.

John Ortberg has referred to himself in writing as a “Dallas for dummies” since he sees part of his pastoral role as making the concepts of Dallas Willard available to the masses.<sup>130</sup> *The Life You’ve Always Wanted* is an excellent presentation of an assortment of spiritual disciplines communicated to the masses in a whimsical and popular way that is very helpful. Ortberg reviews the purpose of the disciplines, which is to avail oneself to the power and grace of God so that one can become more Christlike and automatically do what one couldn’t by will. The author proceeds to elaborate on a series of select disciplines that again reflects differences with the others, but also has many in common. Ortberg in distinction from the others includes the discipline of slowing, reflection on scripture, and rule of life. In the discipline of slowing he includes silence and solitude<sup>131</sup> as well, and meditation and memorization under reflection.<sup>132</sup> It was enjoyable to see how Ortberg captured the rule of life as “A Quest for a Well-Ordered Heart” and “A Game Plan for Morphing” so as to encourage intentional planning for the spiritual life in balance with life as holistically lived.<sup>133</sup>

Adele Calhoun has taken on the task of creating a more or less exhaustive listing of spiritual disciplines in her *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*.<sup>134</sup> She lists 64 disciplines under the rubric of WORSHIP and for each discipline she

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<sup>130</sup> Steve L. Porter and others, “Book Symposium: Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 2, no. 2 (2009): 245-85.

<sup>131</sup> John Ortberg, *The Life You’ve Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 89-92.

<sup>132</sup> Ortberg, *The Life You’ve Always Wanted*, 182-188.

<sup>133</sup> Ortberg, *The Life You’ve Always Wanted*, 194-6.

<sup>134</sup> Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

gives a quote, explains the desire, shares a definition, the biblical basis, what the practice includes and its God's-given fruit. Along with that, she includes a brief almost devotional-like essay on the discipline under consideration with reflection questions, spiritual exercises, and more resources following. She includes an appendix, which is of great help in assessing the spiritual journey and determining the disciplines that are appropriate for one's current season of life. Calhoun's work is an excellent resource for leading and helping others in this aspect of spiritual formation. WORSHIP is elaborated as Worship, Open myself to God, Relinquish the false self, Share my life with others, Hear God's Word, Incarnate the love of Christ, and Prayer.<sup>135</sup> Her posture in presenting the disciplines is that they open one up to transformation. Among the disciplines that she includes in distinction with the previous authors are retreat, spiritual direction, gratitude, teachability, spiritual friendship, etc.

Calhoun brings up the idea of the false self in her list of disciplines and Mulholland in *The Deeper Journey: The Spirituality of Discovering Your True Self*,<sup>136</sup> argues that believers must leave their false self, especially the religious one behind. Previously in *An Invitation to a Journey*, Mulholland argued for a balanced spirituality that gave attention to the "shadow side" of one's personality,<sup>137</sup> which gives credence to Calhoun's extensive list and the need for a certain variety in the practices of spiritual formation so that the "shadow side" and false self are not neglected but opened to transformation. All in all, there is an extensive list of spiritual disciplines included here making the selection

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<sup>135</sup> Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 21.

<sup>136</sup> M. Robert Mulholland, *The Deeper Journey: The Spirituality of Discovering Your True Self* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006).

<sup>137</sup> M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), Kindle Location 450-513.

of those to be included on the instrument in need of discrimination. As each author employs a different way to organize the disciplines, what comes to mind is that all of them fit rather well under the overall concepts of Word (Bible), Prayer and Reflection.

### Transformation and Psychology

Understanding the disciplines as opportunities to open oneself up to the grace of God so that transformation can occur, whether they are aware of it or not, is essential to the reasoning behind the proposed study. Psychology has taken some new directions as seen in the discussion of well-being previously. As noted, the locus of transformation is the interior of the individual. As such it is important to briefly deal with things often not thought about in approaching the reality of spiritual transformation.

Brent Atkinson indicates in the *Emotional Imperative* that the primitive amygdala is the primal response center in our brain that responds to dangers, and is emotionally wired. These responses are trained early on in life as babies are born with this part of the brain fully developed. Cognition starts developing after about 2 years of life about the time most kids start learning language.<sup>138</sup> While there are therapies that may be effective, in couple's therapy, there is a high degree of recidivism to problems, even though couples can learn to be sensitive to their bodily responses and overcome the automatic side of their emotional system and wiring, it is difficult.<sup>139</sup> The point here is that there are reactions that are automatic in humans that cannot be trained by sheer will power. While for some, certain therapies may be effective, and others may not, spiritual disciplines

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<sup>138</sup> Brent J. Atkinson, "The Emotional Imperative," *Family Therapy Networker*, no. 4 (1999): 22-33. [http://thecouplesclinic.com/pdf/emotional\\_imperative.pdf](http://thecouplesclinic.com/pdf/emotional_imperative.pdf) (accessed November 16, 2009).

<sup>139</sup> Atkinson, "The Emotional Imperative," 3, 13-16.

opening up to the gracious work of God may provide the necessary change for the behavior to become automatic and like Christ.

Anke Bisschops in his article, *Spiritual Disciplines, Modern Brain Research and Bosch's Psychological Model of Human Dysfunction*,<sup>140</sup> makes the case that in the realm of psychology and brain science, there is a parallel in some therapies to the impact certain spiritual disciplines have on the brain, specifically from an egocentric perception of the world.<sup>141</sup> Specific disciplines are mentioned: meditation, contemplation, fasting, practicing the presence. Bisschops does not come at it with an explicitly Christian world view, and his thinking agrees with Atkinson on the neuroscience, but it is interesting that he makes the parallel, which indicates that there is a real place for overall spiritual health and well-being hidden in the disciplines.

Recently Michael Leffel has theorized that the spiritual disciplines, including both the apophatic and kataphatic traditions may be a hidden resource in the field of psychology. In fact, the goal of his first series of three articles is to take up the challenge “of constructing an integrative psychology-theology framework for studying the affective basis of spiritual transformation.”<sup>142</sup> Each of the articles handles a different aspect of the development looking at the role of emotion in spiritual transformation. The first discusses the theoretical framework. The second, looks at five trends in psychological theory that

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<sup>140</sup> Anke M. Bisschops, “Spiritual Disciplines, Modern Brain Research and Bosch’s Psychological Model of Human Dysfunction,” *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 63, no. 3,4 (2009): 1-9. <http://journals.sfu.ca/jpcp/index.php/jpcp/article/view/96> (accessed May 21, 2011).

<sup>141</sup> Bisschops, “Spiritual Disciplines, Modern Brain Research and Bosch’s Psychological Model of Human Dysfunction,” 1, 8.

<sup>142</sup> G. Michael Leffel, “Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 1. Prospects and Prescriptions for Reconstructive Dialogue,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 263.



signify a need for a new approach to emotion and transformation. The third, outlines a specific moral motive analysis of transformation.<sup>143</sup> In the second article, Leffel follows similar lines as Bisschops and Atkinson concerning the development of the human and understands that spiritual formation practices, in particular in this case, the apophatic traditions, to be valid contributors to transformation. Leffel affirms the kataphatic tradition, but believes that tradition is assumed in much of what is done in Christian psychology, while lacking in the apophatic.<sup>144</sup> The third article attempts to offer “a preliminary analysis of how moral emotions might be related to spiritual transformation.”<sup>145</sup> One of his core postulates is “[t]he telos of spiritual transformation is the capacity to construct and freedom to express a mature form of personal relatedness (love) from an increasingly capable character. Capable character is defined in terms of prosocial moral affective capacities, and a mature capacity to love is further conceptualized in terms of the master virtue of generative care.”<sup>146</sup>

In Leffel’s second series of three articles, he explores the concept of “[r]elational generativity [which] is conceptualized as the motive and capacity to take care of the strengths-development of cared for others”<sup>147</sup> In the second article he looks at ways the spiritual transformation could employ practices that could construct and destruct implicit

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<sup>143</sup> G. Michael Leffel, “Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 3. A Moral Motive Analysis,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 298.

<sup>144</sup> G. Michael Leffel, “Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 2. Implicit Morality and “Minimal Prosociality,”” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 286.

<sup>145</sup> Leffel, “Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 3. A Moral Motive Analysis,” 298.

<sup>146</sup> Leffel, “Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 3. A Moral Motive Analysis,” 303.

<sup>147</sup> G. Michael Leffel, “Who Cares? Generativity and the Moral Emotions. Part 1, Advancing the “Psychology of Ultimate Concerns,”” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 36, no. 3 (2008): 161-181.

character so greater capacity to love increases while diminishing vice.<sup>148</sup> In the third article he concludes by saying the construct views Christian spiritual development as centrally about the amplification an expansion of caring motives and capacities so that virtue is developed.<sup>149</sup>

All of this is encouraging toward the employment of the spiritual disciplines of both the kataphatic and apophatic traditions. Leffel's articles also interact well with Willard's *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*,<sup>150</sup> where he locates the place of transformation through the disciplines in the heart, core, of the person, which comports well with the *orthokardia*<sup>151</sup> in Leffel. Willard points out that a plan for spiritual transformation through the disciplines is necessary with his Vision, Intention, and Means in implementing the disciplines.<sup>152</sup> As well, Willard understands the affective arena of life to be very important, calling feelings "central for spiritual formation in the Christian tradition."<sup>153</sup> Willard of course closes his work focusing on spiritual transformation with a call for the church to do it in the context of the Great Commission.<sup>154</sup> As such there is both spiritual and psychological basis for the

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<sup>148</sup> G. Michael Leffel, "Who Cares? Generativity and the Moral Emotions. Part 2, A "Social Intuitionist Model" of Moral Motivation," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 36, no. 3 (2008): 182-201.

<sup>149</sup> G. Michael Leffel, "Who Cares? Generativity and the Moral Emotions. Part 3, A Social Intuitionist "Ecology of Virtue," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 36, no. 3 (2008): 202-221.

<sup>150</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, April, 2002).

<sup>151</sup> Leffel, "Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 3. A Moral Motive Analysis," 299.

<sup>152</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 95.

<sup>153</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 117.

<sup>154</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 251.

employment of spiritual disciplines that could inspire Kingdom expansion by the transformation that occurs.

### Repent and Kingdom Life

Dallas Willard in *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God* begins with stating that people are essentially flying upside down; in other words, their ways are radically opposed to life in the Kingdom.<sup>155</sup> He's right and people don't even see it. The *Divine Conspiracy* is a wonderful development of what life in the Kingdom is actually supposed to be and provides a roadmap on how to get there that accents obedience<sup>156</sup> to Jesus and the spiritual disciplines from the inside-out, from the core of the believer's heart. He presents the Sermon on the Mount as a model of interior transformation,<sup>157</sup> and offers a curriculum for Christlikeness that accents a retraining of our embodied patterns.<sup>158</sup> He assures believers that life in the Kingdom is readily available to all who will receive it in Christ and no one who enters Jesus' way will be excluded. The fullness of that life is contingent upon living the life of a disciple of Jesus, as a true learner of His Kingdom lifestyle. So there is a call to repent from flying upside down and to begin to see life in the Kingdom, the eternal kind of life, the life Jesus lived, as available to believers now. The world is God-bathed, so become aware and grow in the capacities to live from its resources (repent).<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 2.

<sup>156</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 312.

<sup>157</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 97-214.

<sup>158</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 341.

<sup>159</sup> Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 61.

The theme of the presence of God's Kingdom is echoed strongly by others and is a distinctly different realm than what people are used to. Gordon Fee in *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* does an incredible job of exegeting the works of Paul as they regard the Holy Spirit (including passages that are sourced in the Holy Spirit's activity, such as gifts). While the 967 page tom is difficult to review here, it is clear that a new era has dawned with the Holy Spirit available to the saints of the New Testament age. Fee makes clear that for Paul, the Holy Spirit (presence of God) is an *experienced* reality, not an idea. In his preface as well as throughout the book, Fee shows that "Paul understood the Spirit always in terms of an empowering presence; whatever else, for Paul the Spirit was an *experienced* reality"<sup>160</sup> and in the introduction, "For Paul the Spirit, as an experienced and living reality was *the* absolutely critical matter for the Christian life, from beginning to end. That at least is the contention of this book."<sup>161</sup> Later Fee states, "...I want to speak to all who belong to Christ, to call us to a greater awareness — an experienced awareness if you will, more along Pauline lines — of the Spirit in our lives and in the life of the church."<sup>162</sup> Fee is very persuasive: "Through the death and resurrection of his son Jesus, our Lord, a gracious and loving God has effected eschatological salvation for his new covenant people, the church, who now, as they await Christ's coming, live the life *of the future* by the power of the Spirit."<sup>163</sup> As to the Spirit's role in prayer he states: "Prayer, therefore, is not simply our cry of desperation or our "grocery list" of requests that we bring before our heavenly *Abba*; prayer is an activity

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<sup>160</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, xxi, (emphasis his).

<sup>161</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 1, (emphasis mine).

<sup>162</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 9.

<sup>163</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 13, (emphasis mine).

inspired by God himself, through his Holy Spirit. It is God siding with his people and, by his own empowering presence, the Spirit of God himself, bringing forth prayer that is in keeping with his will and his ways.”<sup>164</sup> More could be said, but the point being made is that Kingdom life is readily available to all those who would cultivate it, but it has radically different principles than the kingdoms of this earth.

As echoed in a classic on prayer, *The Practice of the Presence of God*<sup>165</sup> by brother Lawrence, God is present and available to His followers by prayer in every moment. The ideas of Willard and Fee are also present in de Caussade’s, *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*,<sup>166</sup> conceptualization of each present moment being influenced by the God who is there. De Caussade speaks of being able to attend to God in the moment of the present in a way that helps one grow in the awareness of this God-bathed world. As such, Kingdom, as discussed here, necessitates a radical change in lifestyle and practice from that which people are accustomed to in this world, pointing once again to a training in godliness or a need to employ the disciplines so they can become familiar with the Eternal kind of life.

#### *Worldview*

Since Kingdom is a radically different construct than what people are used to according to Willard and Fee, it actually presents a new worldview construct that they must enter in order to live inside its culture. Koltko-Rivera did a momentous study of the psychology of worldview and created a model for theoretical use in constructing

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<sup>164</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 867.

<sup>165</sup> Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God* (Springdale, PA.: Whitaker House, 1982).

<sup>166</sup> Jean Pierre de Caussade, Kitty Muggeridge and Richard J. Foster, *The Sacrament of the Present Moment* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1989).

psychometrics. The article, *The Psychology of Worldviews*,<sup>167</sup> looks at past and present worldview constructs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, analyzes their components, creates a definition that allows for change to occur (interaction within the self for modification to occur), while also understanding that any one individual's worldview will have unfounded assumptions and incomplete components and limit what is perceivable and learnable. For Koltko-Rivera worldview is closely associated with religious constructs and affect so they play an important role in the individual's formation of worldview. Spirituality<sup>168</sup> also is significant in his construct. What is important here is that Koltko-Rivera's review sees the significance of religion and spiritual life in one's construct of worldview as psychologically tenable. Moreover understanding worldview in this way shows that real spiritual transformation can occur and Kingdom life can be appropriated, much as Willard and Fee indicate.<sup>169</sup> As a part of the worldview development over time, experience plays a role and creates room for the individual to adapt their perceptions. It is important to note that worldview can restrain or receive new constructs from many sources, but generally it will include a clear experience of reality, which regarding God, the spiritual disciplines do.

Klaus Issler in *Inner Core Belief Formation, Spiritual Practices, and the Willing-Doing Gap*, sees spiritual formation practices as definitely impacting inner-core beliefs and therefore worldview.<sup>170</sup> He also understands Jesus's fundamental assumption was to

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<sup>167</sup> Mark E. Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews." *Review of General Psychology* 8, no. 1 (2004): 3-58.

<sup>168</sup> Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews," 15.

<sup>169</sup> Koltko-Rivera, "The Psychology of Worldviews," 37-38.

<sup>170</sup> Klaus Dieter Issler, "Inner Core Belief Formation, Spiritual Practices, and the Willing-Doing Gap," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 2, no. 2 (2009): 179-198.

cultivate the inner life for transformation.<sup>171</sup> Issler indicates that some of our belief systems can be a barrier to receiving truth due to our plausibility systems.<sup>172</sup> However, reality/truth when one is confronted with it in experience, can open the person to change and transformation, if he is receptive to it.<sup>173</sup> He also advocates spiritual disciplines as a way of core belief (trans)formation since God is the only one who can change us.

### *Obedience*

John Coe writes a wonderful article on distinguishing spiritual formation from moral formation in *Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation: Opening to Spiritual Formation in the Cross of the Spirit*.<sup>174</sup> In this he removes obedience from forms of moralism and legalism that appeal to external standards of religion or society. He sees moralism and legalism as ways to avoid the intervention of God for transformation.<sup>175</sup> His warning is good and would be repeated by Willard, Fee and others. Regarding obedience in the context of his article he states, “[t]his is an obedience of abiding in the Vine and opening to the Life of God living within. It is an obedience, but not one of moralism. In fact, true obedience is a movement away from moralism to an obedience of trust that opens to Another person to live through us based upon the work of Christ on the Cross.”<sup>176</sup> It is an obedience that flows from relationship that believes God is radically

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<sup>171</sup> Issler, “Inner Core Belief Formation, Spiritual Practices, and the Willing-Doing Gap,” 181.

<sup>172</sup> Issler, “Inner Core Belief Formation, Spiritual Practices, and the Willing-Doing Gap,” 189.

<sup>173</sup> Issler, “Inner Core Belief Formation, Spiritual Practices, and the Willing-Doing Gap,” 188.

<sup>174</sup> John H. Coe, “Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation: Opening to Spiritual Formation in the Cross of the Spirit,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 1, no. 1 (2008): 54-78.

<sup>175</sup> Coe, “Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation: Opening to Spiritual Formation in the Cross of the Spirit,” 55.

<sup>176</sup> Coe, “Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation: Opening to Spiritual Formation in the Cross of the Spirit,” 57.

good and one that would flow from the disciplines that cultivate an awareness of God and His empowering Spirit.

Willard in *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* says it this way, “[t]he watchword of a worthy servant is not mere obedience but love, from which appropriate obedience naturally flows.”<sup>177</sup> Peter Lord, in *Hearing God*,<sup>178</sup> looks at obedience as responsiveness to God’s voice. He indicates that growing in our awareness of God’s interaction (voice) creates the necessity of a response, first negatively to the world, and secondly, positively to God.<sup>179</sup> He notes, “there must be an increased response [over time]. The law of increased response says our sensitivity increases in direct proportion to the positive responses we give to our impressions. The more we respond to the things of God — especially to the guiding voice of the Holy Spirit — the more aware we will become of him and his world.”<sup>180</sup> This is the major point of Henry Blackaby’s, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*.<sup>181</sup> Blackaby assumes a context much like John 15, abiding in the vine (Jesus), so when God speaks (leads) it creates a crisis of faith, a crises of decision to go with God’s plans or one’s own.<sup>182</sup> According to Blackaby, this is not an easy task and comes with practice, echoing Lord’s opinion.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Willard, Dallas. *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, November, 1999), 12.

<sup>178</sup> Peter Lord, *Hearing God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988).

<sup>179</sup> Peter Lord, *Hearing God*, 39.

<sup>180</sup> Peter Lord, *Hearing God*, 40.

<sup>181</sup> Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 1993).

<sup>182</sup> Blackaby and King, *Experiencing God*, 19-20.

<sup>183</sup> Blackaby and King, *Experiencing God*, 127-160.



Both Lord and Blackaby would agree with Willard's idea of obedience flowing out of love for God and from God (abiding).<sup>184</sup> All reflect Coes point, cited previously. Such a dynamic also contributes to the idea of spontaneity in Kingdom expansion.

### Kingdom Movements

As Willard indicates in *Renovation of the Heart*, the right response to transformation is the discipling of the nations.<sup>185</sup> He sees the practices of the disciplines opening one to a transformation that can produce an excitement toward inviting others into apprenticeship to Jesus, to the Kingdom.<sup>186</sup> Steve Addison in *Movements that Change the World*, understands that all movements of Kingdom expansion have associated with them an emphasis on a disciplined life. He states, "Every dynamic movement finds its unique mix of spiritual disciplines" and then speaks of The Moravians and Methodists, who had "accountability groups for prayer and confession of sin." He goes on to say, Spiritual disciplines prepare the way for, and support, life-changing experiences."<sup>187</sup> Through the opening to God in the disciplines deep experiences occur that transform faith into passionate pursuit of God.<sup>188</sup> Garrison agrees as he chronicles movements of passionate disciples planting churches on all the continents around the world; significant amounts of prayer, Bible intake, and outreach are practiced by an impassioned faith wanting God.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Blackaby and King, *Experiencing God*, 27-55, and Lord, *Hearing God*, 30-31.

<sup>185</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 231, 240.

<sup>186</sup> Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 228-29.

<sup>187</sup> Steve Addison, *Movements That Change the World* (Smyrna, DE: Missional Press, 2009), 46-47.

<sup>188</sup> Addison, *Movements That Change the World*, 45.

<sup>189</sup> David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Bangalore, India: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 172-183.

These disciplines are associated with all church planting movements. As such, a person or a group opening themselves up to the gracious work of God through the practices of various spiritual disciplines, opens themselves up to a contagious passion for the God they have experienced in Jesus. From among those, certain ones, maybe all, will overflow with passion and excitement that releases a contagion of Kingdom expansion. In fact, it appears that this is the case in the historic movements that Addison mentions as well as what is happening currently. Spiritual formation practices are not causative or instrumental, but strongly associated with all Christian movements so they foster an environment, when approached relationally toward God, that holds the potential for contagious Kingdom expansion.

### **Conclusion**

As only a select number of works were reviewed, they indicate that there is validity to the construct of the hypotheses. Instruments have been designed, as best as humanly possible, to measure the experience of God, or rather spiritual well-being, but these instruments are not without issue. This creates an opportunity to discover whether regular practice of the disciplines has a correlation with spiritual well-being. As well the literature indicates that the practice of the disciplines should also impact positively retention of missionaries on the field and equate with higher levels of perceived ministry effectiveness. In process it was overwhelmingly positive to encounter the amount of literature in psychology, spiritual formation, and theology interested in the influences spiritual practices have on the various aspects of life and health.

## CHAPTER 4

### EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

#### Introduction

All humans live in a fluid known as air, but they rarely pay it any attention and they are generally not consciously aware of it, yet it sustains their life. The same can be said about God and as a result people expect very little from a relationship with Him because He does not confront the senses as other human beings do. Due to the influence of the Enlightenment and Modernism (including the postmodern version), one of the more significant aspects of discipleship has to do with training Christ-followers into conscious awareness of the God who is there, who is interacting with them, who loves them passionately and is inviting them continually into a future of enjoying Him and His Kingdom both now and eternally. This cannot be done without pro-actively seeking Him, even though that in itself is a response to His initiative. Our Triune God does state that if we seek Him, we will find Him.<sup>1</sup> The spiritual disciplines, thus, are essential to engaging with God and training our awareness to His presence.

When Nicodemus, the Jewish religious leader, approached Jesus, He received an answer that shook His world: you must be born again.<sup>2</sup> Jesus was just informing Nicodemus that all this religious leader had depended upon in his life needed to be changed. First, Nicodemus had to realize that God is fantastically good, something he had been exposed to in Jesus.<sup>3</sup> Second, life with God is a gift,<sup>4</sup> it is not based on performance.

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<sup>1</sup> Deut 4:29; 1 Chron 28:9; Jer 29:13; Luke 11:9

<sup>2</sup> John 3:1-15

<sup>3</sup> John 3:1

<sup>4</sup> John 3:3-4

Thirdly, the Father's will is the best and it is radically different than anticipated by Nicodemus.<sup>5</sup> The religious leader had to trust Christ and learn to live a new lifestyle, which at least it appears that he did, even if not that night.<sup>6</sup> As everyone needs, Nicodemus had to learn to live in the way of the Kingdom, the way of Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the way to overcome the effects of the Enlightenment for those in Western cultures is to engage with the supernatural God who is there and whose Kingdom has always been present, as Jesus makes plain.<sup>8</sup> In the Garden, prior to the fall, engaging with God relationally throughout the day was normal.<sup>9</sup> This is still true today, except that due to the fall, everyone needs the Savior<sup>10</sup> and to be shown the way, but life, real life, life with God remains a gift<sup>11</sup> as it always has. Even our physical birth is a gift formed in love. As such, spiritual disciplines allow disciples of Jesus to grow in their awareness of the will and ways of God and life in His Kingdom. Jesus was phenomenally aware of the Father<sup>12</sup> and cultivated that relationship.<sup>13</sup> Paul was experientially<sup>14</sup> aware of God and his

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<sup>5</sup> John 3:8

<sup>6</sup> John 19:39

<sup>7</sup> John 14:6, Eugene H. Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, March, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Matt 4:17

<sup>9</sup> Gen 2

<sup>10</sup> Acts 4:12, we are radically blinded by Sin (willful separation from God and cannot notice Him) and sins (symptoms of our separation or non-involvement relationally with God, which reinforce the inability to see Him). Even apart from the non-supernaturalism of the Enlightenment, our problems are deep.

<sup>11</sup> Rom6:23

<sup>12</sup> John 5:19, 39

<sup>13</sup> Mark 1:35, see Chapter 2

<sup>14</sup> Rom8:14; Eph 1:3; Eph 3:19

cultivation of that relationship is very apparent in his letters.<sup>15</sup> Engaged in as religious acts, the disciplines will divert from relationship to dead, lifeless legalism. Engaged in so as to meet with God, to engage Him relationally from the inside-out, heart to heart, will lead to a life of amazement at His Words and works.

In moving forward, it is important to validate from a biblical perspective, the experiential side of knowing God. The missionary's experience of God through the disciplines and its impact on spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness, and retention forms the focus of this study. It is necessary to set forth the project and its design as it relates to the field missionaries of Greater Europe Mission. The goal is to analyze the results with regard to enhancing the approach to growing in the awareness of God 24/7 through the application of the spiritual disciplines and thus foster an environment for contagious Kingdom expansion. The results and outcomes of the study will be discussed in chapter 5.

### **Experiencing God**

In a sense, the seed for this study goes as far back as 1984-5, when some of the people this author was leading in a discipleship group, literally refused to obey the Great Commission. There was nothing malicious in their attitude, but it was intriguing because they really did not want to share their faith in Jesus with others. Something lurked in the background of their response that was stronger than the intellectual notion of obeying the Word. Back then this writer shared the fear of communicating his faith with others, but recognized God's desire was that he did. Since that time, this writer has been to seminary and to the mission field. The question has remained and formed a part of ongoing

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<sup>15</sup> Eph 3:14, 6:18; 1 Thess 6:17; 2 Tim 4:13

meditation as one who continued engaged in ministry to extend the Kingdom, whether as a student, or in the marketplace, or on foreign soil. Along the way, it was noticed that many leaders in the church experienced moral failure, and in particular a number of pastors/elders who were leaders of churches this writer attended. It even occurs on the mission field. Over time, the realization occurred that more than knowledge, emotion and pleasure, formed the deeper root of disobedience for the Christian. In other words, experience, felt internal emotional or affective issues, maybe even at the subconscious level, impacted willingness to obey God. It was not knowledge or reason, while that too is important. Most of these people would agree concerning what is the better way and hide their refusal to obey — at least until discovered.

As John 17:3 worked its way into this author's soul over time, he realized that knowledge of God is not contained in the intellect, but is holistic.<sup>16</sup> It includes, the intellectual, emotional, affective, spiritual and intuitive realms — sources of knowledge that the Enlightenment worldview generally neglects and sidelines, with the exception of reason. Knowledge of God is experiential, much as one grows in understanding his closest relationships. It is not facts about a person but the impressions (apprehensions of their person) they make that are composites of all that they are (habits, emotions, quirks, sense of humor, intellect, skill, insight, etc.). The same is true of the Triune God as reflected in Jesus. Impressions of His presence and interaction with Christ-followers relationally should sink deep and form their souls. This is knowing God, experiencing God. It is actually quite exciting to see Dallas Willard attempting to move these

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<sup>16</sup> see Ch. 2, footnote 46.

intangible sources of knowledge back into legitimacy before institutions of higher learning.<sup>17</sup>

### Experiencing God is Normal for Those in Relationship with Him

So what is the biblical witness regarding the experience of God? It is clear from the Biblical record that those who sought Him did indeed find Him, and more than that, they experienced His presence. In this regard, Noah comes to mind, who built the Ark because God spoke to Him.<sup>18</sup> Abram left the Ur of the Chaldeans for the same reason.<sup>19</sup> Moses had rich and deep experiences of God<sup>20</sup> as did the Israelites in the Exodus.<sup>21</sup> David slew armies because the Lord led Him and he actively sought His guidance.<sup>22</sup> Daniel and His friends experienced the intervention of God for temporal salvation.<sup>23</sup> Job in the midst of pain did not neglect His God and in the end experienced a rich reward. The two men on the Emmaus road speak of their hearts burning as Jesus shared the Scriptures with them.<sup>24</sup> Felt impact, changed directions and lives. This is God. There is a hidden side to these stories mentioned, and there are more to speak of, but what they all had in common was they were responsive to God, to His supernatural presence. With Daniel, David and

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<sup>17</sup> Dallas Willard, *Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge* (New York, NY: Harper-Collins ebook, 2009), while written at a popular level, apparently another more philosophical tom is in process by the same author.

<sup>18</sup> Gen 6:11-14 & ff.

<sup>19</sup> Acts 7:2-3

<sup>20</sup> Exod 3:14; 34:29

<sup>21</sup> Exod 15

<sup>22</sup> 1 Sam 23:2; 2 Sam 5:23 as examples.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel 3, 6

<sup>24</sup> Luke 24:32

Moses, one gets a glimpse of that hidden side, the side of seeking, praying, journaling (Psalms in David's case; the Pentateuch in Moses's; the book of Daniel), and reading the Word (Daniel 9, reading Jeremiah).

I just mention a few, but these mentioned and others like them are often called the heroes of the faith. Yet what makes them so unique? Or are they unique or just responsive to God? In continuing to meditate on these biblical personalities over the years, the conclusion developed that they are in fact unique, but only because they were responsive to God. They were not perfect and there is nothing in them that merits the favor of God; just read their stories. Nothing sets them apart from us, other than their responsiveness to God. This speaks to both the grace and love of God toward His creation. He is actually their advocate, and ours. Ultimately this is revealed in Jesus as the sacrifice on our behalf, which validates God is for us.<sup>25</sup>

So does the experience of God's leadership and presence remain a reality for today? Is it experiential? Yes. The Bible says it is.<sup>26</sup> And it is cultivated through spiritual life practices, disciplines that open the disciple of Christ to a greater awareness of the One who is always present.<sup>27</sup> Little is it realized that the really limiting factor is that which is permissible in a person's worldview!<sup>28</sup> Yet the spiritual disciplines, when engaged in them relationally to meet with God, and not as religious acts, are tools of transformation to appropriate Kingdom life for the believer and overcome the hindrances posed by

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<sup>25</sup> Rom8:31

<sup>26</sup> John 16:12-15; Rom8:14

<sup>27</sup> Eph 6:18

<sup>28</sup> Klaus Dieter Issler, "Inner Core Belief Formation, Spiritual Practices, and the Willing-Doing Gap," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 2, no. 2 (2009), 189.



worldview, if experience is permitted. It is simply engaging consciously in the awareness of His presence through spiritual practices and “endur[ing] as seeing Him who is unseen.”<sup>29</sup>

### Paul’s Experience of God

Along these lines, it is easy to be amazed at the Apostle Paul. In fact, as with all of writers of Scripture, Paul is not at all just writing facts about God, but trying with words to elucidate his experience of God. This writer often comments now that he is an inerrantist as it relates to Scripture, but he believes the Bible much more deeply and intensely than that. It is attempting to communicate a fullness to reality that one hardly touches in experience and it concerns a fantastically compassionate God as revealed in Jesus. It is such a contrast to the prevailing Western cultural worldview informed by Enlightenment Modernism.

It is necessary only to point to a few things in Paul’s writing that indicate an intrinsic compelling flowing from His experience of God that overcomes all obstacles to obedience, physical, emotional, and spiritual. From Acts 9 forward, Paul’s experience of God provided a confidence for persisting in ministry no matter what the odds.<sup>30</sup>

### *The Love of Christ Controls Us*

Paul writes an amazing passage in 2 Corinthians 5:11-20 that resides in his experience, but it is important to only point out a few things. First, Paul contrasts knowing by way of externals (appearance) and internals (heart)<sup>31</sup> in verse 12. Here Paul’s

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<sup>29</sup> Heb 11:27

<sup>30</sup> 2 Cor 11

<sup>31</sup> Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, καρδία., “The NT use of kardia coincides with the OT understanding of the term, just as much as it differs from the Gk. The meaning of heart as the inner life, the centre of the personality and as the place in which God reveals

emphasis is on intangibles, invisibles, and interior motivational structures and experience. “Paul was content to take his stand on what was not outwardly evident or fully provable, i.e., what was “in the heart”—transparency before God and men and the testimony of the conscience.”<sup>32</sup> Then Paul moves on to say that something deep within compels him forward as an ambassador for Christ.<sup>33</sup> This is not just a fact about Christ’s sacrifice, but a radicalized experience of that redemptive love and the undeserving nature of it.<sup>34</sup> It is such a radicalized experience for Paul that the only appropriate word for it is “new creature” — meaning entirely different and distinct from the old.<sup>35</sup> So strong is this experience for Paul, it is as though God’s passions are leaking through his life and making an appeal for all to be reconciled to God.<sup>36</sup> “The love of Christ controls us.” Why? It is too fantastic to contain!

### *This Treasure in Earthen Vessels*

At another point where Paul is commenting on the ministry he has been entrusted with, he speaks with deep emotion reflecting the value in which he held Christ, the King. “For we do not preach ourselves but *Christ Jesus as Lord*, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the

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himself to men is even more clearly expressed in the NT than in the OT.”

<sup>32</sup> Frank E. Gaebelien, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1976), 2 Cor 5:12.

<sup>33</sup> 2 Cor 5:14, Danker and others, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, συνέχω., “7. to provide impulse for some activity, urge on, impel, τινά someone ἡ ἀγάπη συνέχει ἡμῶς 2 Cor 5:14 (so Bachmann, Belser, Sickenberger, Lietzmann, Windisch, OHoltzmann, 20th Cent.; NRSV). Pass. συνέχετο τῷ πνεύματι ὁ Παῦλος Ac 18:5 v.l.”

<sup>34</sup> Act 9:1-19

<sup>35</sup> 2 Cor 5:17

<sup>36</sup> 2 Cor 5:20

One who has *shone in our hearts* to give the *Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ*. But we have this *treasure* in *earthen vessels*, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves...<sup>37</sup> Then further in the same passage Paul states, “Therefore we do not lose *heart*, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our *inner man* is *being renewed* day by day.”<sup>38</sup> All this is communicated in a context of suffering for the sake of the gospel! Paul is communicating an experience of God he could not articulate, but that he lived. Words were not difficult for Paul, but here the experience of God was inexpressible by words, yet at the same time providing immutable thrust to the ministry entrusted to him.

This same experience of God is available to the saints today as it has been throughout history for those who have sought after God. Behind these words of Paul, stands a hidden life with God (spiritual disciplines) that is visible in many of the letters he wrote. He read, meditated, reflected and prayed over the Scriptures.<sup>39</sup> He also chewed and digested the life of Christ and its meaning as seen from the passages cited.

### **Project Design**

So there is an amazing experience to a relationship with God that can only be enhanced by the pursuit of Him through making space to meet with Him in the exercise of spiritual disciplines. At least that is what is indicated by the passages and personalities

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<sup>37</sup> 2 Cor 4:5-7, (emphasis mine) so as to highlight the interior experience of Paul. “Paul is not disparaging the human body or implying that the body is simply the receptacle of the soul.... Rather, he is contrasting the relative insignificance and unattractiveness of the bearers of the light with the inestimable worth and beauty of the light itself. Behind this contrast Paul sees a divine purpose—that men may recognize that “this all-surpassing power” is God’s alone. His power finds its full scope in human weakness (12:9).” Gaebelein, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*.

<sup>38</sup> 2 Cor 4:16, emphasis mine so as to highlight the interior experience of Paul.

<sup>39</sup> Paul cites the Old Testament numerous times in his epistles, indicating how much he reflected and meditated on their meaning, especially in light of Jesus (Is 65:1-2 cf. Rom 10:20-21; Jer 9:24 cf. 1 Cor 1:31, etc.).

previously cited. It has been noted in this writer's own journey that words cannot possibly convey that which has been experienced in relationship to God through Jesus. It is overwhelming even to write about, yet the desire is to extend the possibility of such richness to all. The goal of practicing the spiritual disciplines is not religious exercise, but the pursuit of a wonderful and satisfying relationship with God. It is in the disciplines a person makes space and meets in full consciousness the God who is here in Jesus. It is not the intent to leave Him in that meeting, but to walk with Him in the garden of our day, 24/7.

The project<sup>40</sup> seeks to explore whether the experience of a relationship with God through spiritual disciplines impacts substantially three dimensions of missionary life: spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness and retention. A major hindrance to that experience can be the worldview in which a missionary is formed, either restricting or permitting experiences to shape that which is expected in the experience of God.<sup>41</sup> However, consistent practice over time of spiritual disciplines can in and of themselves overcome such barriers due to the experience of God that takes place.

The context for the study is the field missionaries of Greater Europe Mission. First, there is a desire to simply glean the state of spiritual practices among the missionaries as it stands today. Second, the design concerns discovering whether there is any statistically significant correlation of their practice upon their spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness and retention. Thirdly, does any specific set of spiritual practices arise in the study that more substantially impacts these dimensions of missionary life?

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<sup>40</sup> A more detailed description of the project design is available upon request.

<sup>41</sup> Issler, "Inner Core Belief Formation, Spiritual Practices, and the Willing-Doing Gap," 189.

## Definitions

Paul, because of his heart passions for his Lord and his compelling compassion toward those outside the Kingdom was adept at understanding all circumstances, either good or bad, from a positive framework, which also is a signal of spiritual well-being.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, Paul, while He had many disappointments in ministry over the years, he nonetheless felt God had been effective through him, since he felt he needed to move to Rome and Spain.<sup>43</sup> As to retention, Paul was so impressed and impelled by the love of Christ, he could think of doing nothing else than extending the Kingdom of God, even near his life's end.<sup>44</sup> So one's relationship with God can impact all three dimensions of missionary life. As such, in order to properly prepare the survey instrument to explore the missionary's experience of God, each of these dimensions needs to be adequately defined.

### *Spiritual Well-Being*

Spiritual well-being, has at its core this definition: "Spiritual well-being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community, and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness" as indicated by Ellison.<sup>45</sup> In the discussion of the conceptualization of Spiritual well-being, Ellison states, that the "spiritual dimension does not exist in isolation from our psyche and soma, but provides an integrative force."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Acts 21:27-22:22; Acts 28:30-31

<sup>43</sup> Rom 15:24-28; Acts 19:10, 26

<sup>44</sup> 2 Tim 4:6-18

<sup>45</sup> Craig W. Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization and Measurement," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11, no. 4 (1983), 331.

<sup>46</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being," 331.

The concept is also seen to have an explicit emotional component, “[a]t a minimum, human beings are biological, cognitive, interpersonal, emotional, and spiritual beings.”<sup>47</sup> Ellison’s article goes on to indicate that a key aspect of spiritual well-being is the ability to interpret “suffering within the context of deeper positive meaning.”<sup>48</sup> So the idea is broad, but includes all aspects that could impact human experience or well-being, including transcendence of self and other the spiritual aspects. So *spiritual well-being* is then the measure of life as it is integrated with God and others in relationship resulting in an overall positive experience in life, despite or in light of circumstances, much as expressed by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4 and 11.

#### *Perceived Ministry Effectiveness*

While primarily Ellison developed the definition of spiritual well-being, which is consistent with Scripture, here it is necessary to share the thinking regarding “perceived ministry effectiveness.” The word “perceived” is used because in any survey instrument an individual completes, he can only report how he perceives the questions and the responses to them. So in the case of ministry effectiveness, the answers are constrained by the person’s perspective of himself and his ministry impact. The real import of the missionary’s ministry as described by objective others may be quite different. As well, ministry effectiveness includes a component of satisfaction in one’s ministry efforts and accomplishments, so there is an emotional side to the work too. The Apostle Paul reflected this in his previously stated desire to go to Spain. Since the topic under discussion concerns missions and ministry, the more significant result is whether the

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<sup>47</sup> Ellison, “Spiritual Well-Being,” 335.

<sup>48</sup> Ellison, “Spiritual Well-Being,” 332.

ministry gets passed on to others, in particular, nationals. As a part of ministry effectiveness, a component of the definition includes building into others for effective ministries of their own, much as Paul encouraged Timothy to train others.<sup>49</sup> In passing the ministry on to others, it is important to note that it is more than a task handed off to another as in a relay race, but the passions and motivations are also a part of that which is imparted.<sup>50</sup> As such, *perceived ministry effectiveness* is the missionary's self-perception concerning his work and its impact toward the effective ministries of others, leading to a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment on the part of the missionary.

### *Retention*

Retention is the opposite of attrition and its corollary. Attrition has to do with the loss or return of personnel prematurely from the field of service for preventable reasons in the context of missions.<sup>51</sup> Retention, on the other hand, has to do with the missionary remaining on their field of service. In the context of this study, only the missionary's *intention* to remain on their field of service can be measured. So *retention* is the measure of the missionary's intention to return and remain on their field of service after their next home ministry assignment. Home ministry assignments are generally points in time where the missionary has a planned return to their sending country (country of origin usually) for the maintenance of relational, financial, and other support structures important to their ministries. Home ministry assignments also form a context in which it

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<sup>49</sup> 2 Tim 2:2

<sup>50</sup> 2 Tim 4:1-2

<sup>51</sup> William David Taylor and World Evangelical Fellowship, *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1997), Ch. 1. This sentence is a simple summary of the essence of chapter 1 of this book.

is easier for the missionary to consider and weigh their desire to continue on their field of service.

In searching for a correlation to these dimensions and the missionary's spiritual life, it must be understood that in the case of all three of these areas of a missionary's life and work, their spiritual life practices are only one component that has the potential to influence spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness, and retention. Many other factors are significant to those dimensions of life and could exert a stronger influence or overriding influence.<sup>52</sup> Each of these aspects of life is multi-faceted for not only the missionary, but for all people.

### Hypotheses

In light of the preceding definitions, what are the hypotheses of this study? They concern exploring the relationship and impact of spiritual disciplines as practiced by GEM field missionaries on three dimensions of missionary life, spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness and retention. If such a relationship exists between spiritual life practices and these other dimensions of a missionary's life, then the implications for the leadership and soul-care of the missionary so as to encourage his experience of God needs to be evaluated. Moreover, Greater Europe Mission as an agency would be wise in implementing policies and programs that promote the development of the missionary's spiritual formation and enhance his experience of God. Not only would the missionary's life and ministry benefit, but the burden of leading them would be lessened as God's heart for both the missionary and the nations—*missio Dei*—is increasingly appropriated, not by knowledge about God, but by the very experience of

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<sup>52</sup> Health, finances, extended family issues, educational considerations for children, etc.



God and His love. They too could become controlled by the love of Christ, much as Paul was. This would be compelling for the missionary and only enhance his desire to engage with others concerning God and the expansion of His Kingdom.

In order to discern whether such a relationship exists between the disciplines and these dimensions of missionary life, the hypotheses must be clearly stated. The assumption, statistically speaking, is that there is no correlation between spiritual life practices and these three dimensions of a missionary's life. This is called the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and it is the same for each of these aspects as they concern the missionary. In the statistical equations (null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis) below,  $r$  represents the *Pearson's Correlation Coefficient* and the assumption is expressed in this way:

$$H_0 : r = 0.0 \text{ (no relationship exists)}$$

The alternative hypotheses ( $H_a$ ) are written in this way:

$$H_a : r \neq 0.0 \text{ (a relationship exists)}$$

As such, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is testing whether something other than the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is suggested and that relationships quite possibly do exist between spiritual formation practices and the three dimensions of missionary life under discussion. However, this is done by either failing to reject or rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), not by validating the alternative. However, if the null hypothesis is rejected based on the sample evidence, then that indicates the alternative hypothesis is in effect, meaning a relationship plausibly exists based on the science of probabilities.

The *Pearson's Correlation Coefficient* ( $r$ ) is an indicator as to whether some sort of linear relationship does exist between the items compared. Generally speaking these

coefficients range between  $-1$  and  $1$ , and the closer the number is to either  $-1$  or  $1$ , the stronger the relationship is.<sup>53</sup> In relationship to the three dimensions under study here, spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness, and retention, the p-value<sup>54</sup> to either accept or reject the null hypothesis based on the sample data collected is set at  $p < 0.05$ . This increases the probability of a Type I error, rejecting the null hypothesis when in fact it is true, so a check will be made at a  $p < 0.01$  for the correlation coefficients as well. However, a lower p-value increases the probability of a Type II error, rejecting the alternative hypothesis when it is in fact true, but only an increase in sample size can mitigate Type II errors.

### Instruments

In the design of the instrument to deploy on-line, the spiritual disciplines lists created by Foster,<sup>55</sup> Willard,<sup>56</sup> Calhoun,<sup>57</sup> and Whitney<sup>58</sup> were used in selecting the disciplines to be queried in the survey. With regard to prayer, an article entitled, *The Effects of Prayer and Prayer Experiences on Measures of General Well-Being*, by Poloma and Pendleton

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<sup>53</sup> Moderate to strong relationships are usually greater than  $0.3$  or less than  $-0.3$ . Whether it is positive or negative indicates the direction of the relationship. A positive relationship is one where as one variable increases, the other does as well. The negative sign indicates an inverse relationship where as one variable increases, the other declines or decreases.

<sup>54</sup> A p-value measures the probability of the test statistic occurring if the null hypothesis is true for the sample data taken. If the test statistic generates a p-value of less than  $0.05$ , for example, the sample results occur less than  $5\%$  of the time when the null hypothesis is true, so there is enough evidence against the null hypothesis.

<sup>55</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978).

<sup>56</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988), 158.

<sup>57</sup> Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

<sup>58</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991).

was used to select some questions they had already developed and tested regarding different types of prayer.<sup>59</sup> An appendix of Calhoun's work was extensively used in creating questions on spiritual practices as well.<sup>60</sup> Other existing questionnaires found online also influenced the items included on the survey.<sup>61</sup> Significant changes were made to the initial questions after review of the instrument by others. All questions on the survey concern the respondent's self-perception.

### *Spiritual Well-Being Scale*

As indicated in the literature review, the instrument that is best suited for measuring spiritual well-being was determined to be the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS), which has two sub-scales, one for religious well being (RWB) and the other for existential well being (EWB). The SWBS<sup>62</sup> has the most extensive use and testing of any of the instruments available to measure quality of life as it relates to its spiritual aspects. As stated in the *Manual for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale*, the measurement developed by Ellison and Paloutzian has high reliability and internal consistency:

The RWBS, EWBS, and SWBS have good reliability. For the RWBS, test-retest reliability coefficients across four studies, with 1-10 weeks between testings, are .96, .99, .96, and .88. For the EWBS, the coefficients are .86, .98, .98, and .73. For total SWBS, the coefficients are .93, .99, .99, and .82. The index of internal consistency, coefficient alpha, also shows high reliability. Across 7 samples, the internal

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<sup>59</sup> M. M. Poloma and B. F. Pendleton, "The Effects of Prayer and Prayer Experiences on Measures of General Well-Being," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 19, no. 1 (1991), 71-83.

<sup>60</sup> Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*, 258-263.

<sup>61</sup> These items are found on the researcher's computer in the folder/directory "Psbl Thesis Project Helps SFML."

<sup>62</sup> Despite the ceiling effect noted in the literature, this is the best instrument available for this study. It is anticipated that the ceiling effect may become a factor, but since the goal is to see the correlation of the specific spiritual practices with spiritual well-being, it is assumed the ceiling effect's impact on that determination will be minimal to negligible.

consistency coefficients ranged from .82 to .94 (RWB), .78 to .86 (EWB), and .89 to .94 (SWB) ....<sup>63</sup>

Regarding the instrument's validity, the authors write:

The SWBS has good face validity as is evident by the content of the items. Research has shown that the items cluster as expected, into the RWB and EWB sub-scales. Research has also shown that the SWBS is a good general indicator of well-being, and is especially sensitive to lack of well-being. SWB, RWB, and EWB are correlated positively with a positive self concept, sense of purpose in life, physical health, and emotional adjustment. They are negatively correlated with ill health, emotional maladjustment, and lack of purpose in life....<sup>64</sup>

For these reasons as well as the wide use of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, it was decided that it was the best choice and important to include as a part of the on-line questionnaire for this study.<sup>65</sup>

All items are measured by a Likert scale with responses ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."<sup>66</sup> As the appendix of the article discussing its conceptualization and measurement indicated, "all Items are scored from 1 to 6, with a higher number representing more well-being. Reverse scoring for negatively worded items. Odd-numbered items assess religious well-being; even numbered items assess existential well-being."<sup>67</sup> The SWBS comprised the first 20 questions of the on-line instrument with a theoretical maximum of 120 and a minimum of 20.

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<sup>63</sup> Craig W. Ellison and Raymond Paloutzian, "Manual for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale," (purchased from [www.lifeadvance.com](http://www.lifeadvance.com), accessed September 12, 2011, 1991-2009 ver. 1.1), 3.

<sup>64</sup> Ellison and Paloutzian, "Manual for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale," 4.

<sup>65</sup> Permission to use the instrument was granted under specified conditions for on-line deployment and for a minimal cost. The estimated and agreed upon sample size was N=50 whether it was larger or smaller than that was not significant.

<sup>66</sup> Ellison and Paloutzian, "Manual for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale," 5-6.

<sup>67</sup> Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization and Measurement," 338.

The rest of the on-line instrument is researcher-designed to include questions relating to perceived ministry effectiveness, retention, and spiritual life practices (spiritual disciplines). The major limiting factors in creating the instrument were the consideration of time to complete the on-line survey and an appropriate array of questions dealing with each of the dimensions under consideration, the longer section of which would relate to the spiritual disciplines.

### *Retention*

Two questions (21 and 22) addressed the intention of remaining on the field of service after the missionary's next home ministry assignment. Each question was stated positively with regard to either returning to their field of service or their country of origin. Likert scales were used for both questions with responses from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" and assigned a quantitative measure from 1 to 6 depending on the strength of agreement. However, reverse scoring was used for the intention to return to the country of origin, creating a scale with a maximum score of 12 and a minimum of 2, where 12 indicates no wavering in intention to stay and 2 indicates a definite return to the country of origin. These two questions combine to create the retention index (*Retention*) for correlation purposes.

### *Perceived Ministry Effectiveness*

With regard to *perceived ministry effectiveness*, three items were included addressing the missionaries perception of the effectiveness of their ministry, satisfaction in relationship to their overall ministry accomplishments, and whether their work has led to the effective ministries of nationals (or GEM personnel, depending on their role in the organization) in their context. Three questions were included to assess this dimension of

the missionary's life. Each of the questions was designed as a Likert scale, with two ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," and a third ranging from "Rarely" to "In almost all cases." Each was assigned quantitative measure of 1 to 6, increasing based on the magnitude of agreement or frequency. These are questions 23-25 of the on-line survey instrument and provide a maximum score of 18 and a minimum of 3, with the higher end indicating complete satisfaction and effectiveness as perceived and 3 denoting the exact opposite. The variable index of perceived ministry effectiveness is denoted as *Effectiveness* for correlation purposes.

### *Spiritual Life Practices*

Regarding the dimension of spiritual life practices two areas of spiritual disciplines were considered: (1) frequency as that relates to the discipline of maintaining the practice intentionally; and (2) characterization of habit. The first relates to the number of times a person may engage regularly with a spiritual discipline and the second concerns the self-perception of that which is characteristic of the missionary. A range of 26 spiritual practices/disciplines is included in the instrument.<sup>68</sup> All spiritual disciplines are assumed to correlate positively with the three dimensions of missionary life under study.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> The questions covered daily devotionals (Q26-28, quiet time), reading the Bible (Q29 intake), study of Bible (self, Q30 intake), Bible ministry Preparation (study, Q31 intake/reflection), Bible memorization (Q32, memorization), meditation (Q33), Bible reflections (Q34, reflection), contemplative prayer (Q35), prayer as conversation (Q36), guidance (Q37), silence (Q38), solitude (Q39), personal worship (Q40), intercession (Q41), submission to God (Q42, obedience), thanking God (Q43, celebration), Worship/Celebration (Q44), worship in community (Q45), outreach (Q46), celebration (Q47), journaling (Q48), Sabbath (Q49), fasting (Q50), communion (Q51— celebration/worship/reflection), Retreat (Q52), disciplines regularly practiced personally (Q53), disciplines practiced regularly in community (Q54), 3 most important (Q55), 3 least important (Q56); characterized by questions: spiritual friendship (Q57), submission to Spirit (Q58), obedience (Q59), intimacy with Christ (Q60), listening (Q61), submission to others (Q62, for spiritual growth), intentionality in outreach (Q63), stewardship (Q64), stewardship frequency (Q65), discipline in devotion (Q66), awareness of disciplines (Q67), desire help (Q68, desire for spiritual growth in intimacy); practices that bring deepest intimacy (Q69), hindrances to intimacy (Q70).

<sup>69</sup> This assumption means that as the strength of the discipline increases in the life of the individual, so does its positive impact on SWBS, *Effectiveness*, and *Retention*.

Spiritual life practices are questions number 26 through 70, with 26-52 relating to frequency issues and 53-68 concern that which characterizes the missionary, with items 53-56 and 69-70 seeking qualitative responses. The purpose of the qualitative questions was to gain perspective on the missionary's own perception of his spiritual life. All of frequency and character items were developed with 6-point Likert scales appropriate to the discipline being addressed.<sup>70</sup> Those items addressing character followed Likert scales with responses ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" and given quantitative values from 1 to 6, depending on the level of agreement. Items 65-68 were reverse-scored due to their level of increased agreement indicating a greater felt deficit in that area. Questions 53-56 and 69-70 are qualitative in nature and provide insight into the other answers as well as the spiritual life of the missionaries. An index relating to variety was created as a composite of all the disciplines included with no emphasis on any particular spiritual discipline. The theoretical maximum value for the scale for Spiritual Practices Index (SPI) is 234 and the minimum is 39. All the spiritual disciplines were worded so as to be effective toward asking a single question with a single idea in mind.

Questions 71-76 concerned the demographics of GEM's personnel, with the items being broad enough so as to ensure anonymity in the responses. These items concerned length of service, decade of life, gender, educational level, formal theological education and GEM organizational field leadership responsibilities.

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<sup>70</sup> For frequency or regularity, the scales were formed either around the concept of a week or a year with sub-scale attention to months and weeks, depending on the practice. For instance, frequency of personal Bible study was asked on a weekly scale ranging from "Rarely" to "More than once a day" with 4 intermediating responses. Quantitative measures ranging from 1 to 6 were assigned to the responses, with the higher numbers relating to the higher frequency of practice. The practice of Spiritual Retreat, on the other hand, was measured on an annual scale, rather than weekly, and given a quantitative value of 1 to 6, depending on the frequency of practice indicated from "Rarely" to "Once a week."

Composite indices were created for correlations of the disciplines relating to Word (SPWo),<sup>71</sup> Prayer (SPPr),<sup>72</sup> and Reflection (SPRef).<sup>73</sup> These indices were formed from an appropriate combination of survey questions (disciplines) that touched on the Word (use of Bible), or Prayer and or Reflection in order to compare them to the three dimensions of spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness, and retention. Due to the witness of the various personalities of Scripture functioning interactively with God throughout their day, an index focusing on responsiveness to God (RtGI)<sup>74</sup> was created as well. These clusters were conceived to discern if there were influences of greater or lesser degree among the combinations of disciplines on the three dimensions of missionary life under research.

#### *Review of Instrument*

The survey instrument along with an introductory letter approved by the IRB was reviewed by others and field tested. As a result of this process, the SWBS scales were reverse-ordered from their original design, which means they now move from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” and so move positively from left to right as with the other scales. The field test confirmed the 15-20 minute completion time for the survey. Appendix B contains the deployed survey instrument for this study.

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<sup>71</sup> Spiritual Practices focused on the Word of God (SPWo); Qs 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.

<sup>72</sup> Spiritual Practices focused on Prayer (SPPr); Qs 28, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 61.

<sup>73</sup> Spiritual Practices focused on Reflection (SPRef); Qs 34, 39, 40, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65.

<sup>74</sup> Spiritual Practices focused on Responsiveness to God (SPRtG); Qs 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 47, 48, 52, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63.



## Methodology

As reflected in previous research among missionaries, high volunteer response rates are difficult at best. One study done by Jensma<sup>75</sup> indicated that she started her research with approval to contact 300 missionaries from a variety of organizations (30 of them). Only 54 people contacted volunteered for that study, which was two-tiered. Issues arose in process that resulted in only 42 completing the first portion of the study. The second portion of the study had fewer than 14 missionaries of the original 54 complete the necessary instruments. Jensma pointed to the volunteer aspect of the research and traditional post as contributing factors (among others) to the lack of response. In another study done concerning missionaries and their job satisfaction, the response rate by electronic delivery achieved was 28% from among 1,682 missionaries.<sup>76</sup> As indicated by these studies, the best approach to deploying the research instrument and aggregating responses will be through the internet (email and web-site). Such an approach provides the maximum opportunity for achieving the best response rate, especially among a dispersed population (30 countries). Moreover, email and web are the primary avenues through which GEM communicates with its personnel. As well, electronic distribution allows for better preservation of anonymity (ensuring greater honesty with answers) in an organization such as GEM.

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<sup>75</sup> Jeanne L. Jensma, "The Importance and the Difficulty of Doing Research with a Missionary Population," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 25, no. 3 (1997): 384-387.

<sup>76</sup> Douglas E. Trimble, "Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention of Missionaries," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 34, no. 4 (2006): 254.

### *Survey Sample of GEM Field Missionaries*

The approved IRB letter<sup>77</sup> was sent by email with a password and an internet link to all the field missionaries of GEM on November 2, 2011. Field missionaries are those who are currently serving on a foreign field or are serving in Europe, but are currently in North America on various-length home ministry assignments (formerly known as furlough). GEM missionaries serve in approximately 30 countries of Europe and its approaches (North Africa, Turkey, etc.). At the time of the email, approximately 272 people were serving in GEM as field missionaries.<sup>78</sup> The survey automatically closed at midnight on December 10, 2011. Overall there were 70 completed<sup>79</sup> surveys collected, making the response rate 25.7%, which is in line with real world results of 20-30%, but far below the 50-70% response needed for making generalization to the whole group.<sup>80</sup> However, the demographics of the survey respondents appear to be sufficiently close to the demographics of Greater Europe Mission so that generalization of the results is plausible.

Men and women responded to the survey equally at 50% a piece. The mix of respondents regarding length of time on the field is representative of GEM with 7.1% serving less than one year, 10% serving 1-4 years, another 10% serving 5-8 years, 17.1% serving 9-12 years, 5.7% serving 13-16 years and 50% serving more than 16 years. With

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<sup>77</sup> Included in Appendix A.

<sup>78</sup> As indicated during leadership meetings from November 14-17, 2011 in Kandern, Germany.

<sup>79</sup> A total of 92 visits to the survey site with 22 incomplete surveys and 70 completed.

<sup>80</sup> Deborah Rumsey, *Statistics for Dummies* (111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishers, Inc., 2011), 258., "Today's fast-paced society is saturated with surveys; many if not most response rates fall far short of 70%. In fact, response rates for today's surveys are more likely to be in the 20% to 30% range, unless the survey is conducted by a professional polling organization such as Gallup or you are being offered a new car for just filling one out."

regard to age, 5.7% of those who completed surveys were 20-30 years old, 20% were 31 to 40 years old, 21.4% were 41-50 years old, and 38.6% were 51-60 years old and 14.3% were over 60. Approximately 28.6% were involved in organizational leadership, while 71.4% were not. Roughly 10% had doctorates, 42.9% had earned a Master's degree, 38.6% had completed college, 2.9% had associates degrees, 2.9% had some college, 2.8% had either completed High School or its equivalent, and 1.4% had a medical degree. Since the work of GEM concerns Christian ministry, a number of personnel have some level of theological education: 7.1% of the respondents have theological doctorates, 24.3% have a seminary degree, 7.1% have had some seminary, 20% have degrees from Bible College, 10% had some Bible College, another 8.6% had a one-year equivalent in Bible, and another 22.9% of the respondents reported no theological training (not applicable). Thus those who responded represent the general demographics of GEM, so the results may have meaning for the agency as a whole.

### *Analysis Tools*

SurveyGizmo<sup>81</sup> was chosen for the deployment and aggregation of the data from the survey instrument. StatPlus:Mac, Microsoft Excel, and MiniTab 16 were software tools used to do more intensive statistical analysis of the quantitative data. This included creating the quantitative indices for Spiritual Practices: SPI, SPWo, SPPr, SPRef and RtGI, as previously defined, making scatter plots, deriving Pearson's Correlation Coefficients, performing regression analyses, and comparing the different demographic groupings within GEM.

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<sup>81</sup> [www.SurveyGizmo.com](http://www.SurveyGizmo.com).

## Procedure

Data was collected from the respondents between November 2 and December 10, 2011 by an internet survey company, SurveyGizmo. A variety of reports were run in order to get and overall feel for the data. The report concerning GEM missionaries' spiritual life as a group received particular emphasis. The first step in the analysis focused on reviewing of this general report to detect the general spiritual life practices of the missionaries.

The second step in the process focuses on creating the numeric totals for each of the respondents regarding the SWBS and its sub scales (RWB and EWB) as well as the various spiritual practices indices (SPI, SPWo, SPPr, SPRef, RtGI) in Microsoft Excel. The respondents were ranked according to the SWBS totals so as to see if discernible patterns arose with regard to the practice of spiritual disciplines among the higher totals of GEM field missionaries.

After the data was organized for the various analyses, and in order to explore the missionaries' experience of God, the third step performed sought to discover correlations from among the survey questions and the three dimensions of missionary life, spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness and retention. Correlations analyses were also performed between the researcher-designed indices for the various combinations of spiritual disciplines (SPI, SPWo, SPPr, SPRef, and RtGI) and the three dimensions of missionary life under study. This was done by examining the generated Pearson's Correlation Coefficients.

Since it is reasonable to assume more than just spiritual life practices account for spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness, and retention, Pearson's

Correlation Coefficients within the moderate to strong range ( $r > 0.40$ ) at a p-value of 0.05 or less ( $p < 0.05$ ) were considered significant. A check of the correlation coefficients was performed at a  $p < 0.01$  to insure against Type I errors. For those Pearson's Correlation Coefficients greater than 0.40 with a  $p < 0.05$ , scatter plots were made to see if a discernible linear relationship is present visually. If such was the case, a linear regression was run to determine fit, completing the fourth step in the procedure.

The fifth step involves discerning whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative ( $H_a$ ) for any of the three dimensions of missionary life within this study based on the analysis of the Pearson's Correlations and scatter plots. Questions/disciplines or combinations of spiritual disciplines (SPI, SPWo, SPPr, SPRef, and RtGI) reflecting moderate to strong correlations with SWBS, *Effectiveness*, or *Retention*, will be reported, discussed and interpreted.

A sixth step may be warranted, should any number of variables (questions/spiritual practices) have influence on any one of the three dimensions of a GEM missionary's life. In such cases, a limited best subsets regression analysis will be performed with MiniTab 16.<sup>82</sup> The main reason for suggesting this has to do with the Spiritual Practices subsets (SPI, SPWo, SPPr, SPRef, and RtGI). Should they correlate well with the one of the three dimensions, they would indicate that a variety of disciplines acting together exert a greater influence than any one spiritual discipline. A computer generated analysis, even at a limited level, could possibly suggest a higher degree of correlation and fit, which could be suggestive of certain spiritual practices having a greater influence on the dimensions

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<sup>82</sup> It is "limited" because there is a limit to the number of variables MiniTab 16 can handle in a best subsets regression. This study has a total of 39 variables related to the three dimensions of missionary life. MiniTab 16 has a maximum capacity for 31 variables in a best subsets analysis. Variables (questions) that are discovered to exhibit little or no relationship will be excluded to reduce the set to 31.

of missionary experience involved. It could also indicate directions for further study, including revising the questions so they better capture the data sought. However, such an analysis will provide only a computer generated look at the more significant spiritual practices influencing one of the three dimensions under study. It cannot confirm the experience those disciplines will have on a human subject who exercises them in pursuit of knowing His Lord better.

Where possible, the seventh step includes discovering any statistically significant differences in means among the sup-populations by employing either the 2-Sample t-test or the One-way ANOVA test in MiniTab 16, depending upon the number of sub-populations to analyze. The goal is to discover if there were any statistically significant and easily discernible differences in the sub-populations within GEM as demarcated by the demographics included in the instrument. A complicating factor could arise from small sample sizes for any of the sub-group demographics when making comparisons.

### **Conclusion**

A walk with Jesus forms an amazing story, at least as indicated by the pages of Scripture. Whatever He touches, He transforms. The life of the Apostle Paul reflects just how strong this relationship with Jesus can be and the influence it can exert on the interior motivations of the heart. The trajectory of history and the influence of worldview formed by the Enlightenment and its derivatives, like static, can severely curtail the experience of God enjoyed through spiritual practices by the missionary in the modern world. The hope of this project is to explore the latent strength of the missionary's relationship with God through spiritual practices by correlating them with spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness and retention. Along the way, a greater

understanding of the disciplines as practiced by field missionaries of Greater Europe Mission will be gleaned, allowing for a way forward to enhance their relational experience of God. The goal in the outcomes is to discover pathways that allow leaders of missionaries in GEM to better encourage the awareness of God's presence and activity 24/7 among those they serve, so that like Paul the Apostle, the experience of God is so rich and compelling that its end is an environment in which the contagious expansion of the Kingdom can result and the *missio Dei* continue.

## CHAPTER 5

### UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL FOR CONTAGIOUS KINGDOM EXPANSION

#### Introduction

Considering the powerful influence the Apostle Paul's relationship with God exerted upon his person and ministry, causes one to consider the potential that could be unleashed should missionaries experience God in much the same way Paul did, as real, vital, present, interactive, and overwhelmingly loving. Spiritual Formation Practices can open that door, lead to an experience that is rich and powerful — transforming and compelling in the *missio Dei*, the expansion of the Kingdom. Indeed, such an experience of God would unleash a contagion because His heart for people and the world would become His servants' heart since they would be abiding in the vine, as Paul did and Jesus intended.<sup>1</sup>

The desire here is to look at the experience of relationship with God possible in the practice of spiritual disciplines that move missionaries more consciously into the awareness of His Presence throughout the day (24/7). In so doing, the experience of the heart will provide an impelling into the will and ways for God releasing an incredible contagion for Kingdom expansion.

#### Listening to the State of Spiritual Formation Practices in GEM

The survey instrument deployed to Greater Europe Mission field workers opened up the way to listen to them regarding their spiritual disciplines and practices. They were boldly transparent with their experience of God, opening the way to consider how best to assist them in deepening their relationship with their Lord and for agency leaders to

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<sup>1</sup> Gal 2:20; John 15:1-17



nurture such a life among them. Their soul care and the richness that can provide for their experience of God, His Kingdom, and their vital role in its expansion, can only start by listening.<sup>2</sup> The greater emphasis in the discussion will tend toward the more significant findings as integrated with the statistical results.

### General Review of the Observational Data

The observational information shows the current state spiritual life practices among GEM missionaries and will provide insight for leading missionaries more deeply into the soul care they both need and long for in the midst of their busy ministries. Since the actual report is included in Appendix C, liberties will be taken, at times, to make generalizations that summarize what is presented in that data by logically associating sub-groups of responses with each other in order to gain insight.

#### *Retention*

Of the GEM missionaries who responded,<sup>3</sup> 95.7% indicated a desire to remain on the field at varying levels of agreement, with 52.2% indicating a strong intention to return to the field. However, when looking at the inverse idea of returning to the country of origin, only 72.4% of the respondents indicated a desire to remain on the field after their next HMA, at various levels of disagreement with the question. Again at differing levels of agreement, only 27.6% indicated the intention to return to their country of origin. Signifying that roughly 54% of GEM missionaries contend with some form of doubt, while only 10.1% are definite in their intention to return to their country of origin.

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<sup>2</sup> The instrument was completed by 70 field missionaries from GEM, and as such there are 5,320 answers to review, analyze and interpret. Obviously this can only be done in summary form.

<sup>3</sup> One individual of the 70 in the sample, did not respond to either question making up the *Retention* index, so the sample for that index is  $n = 69$ . All questions were soft-required, so the respondent could, if persistent, move forward through the instrument.

However, 65.2% of GEM respondents indicate moderate to strong agreement regarding the intention of remaining on the field.

### *Effectiveness*

On the whole, 88.5% of GEM field missionaries expressed the ministries in which they were engaged were very effective, with only 11.5% indicating otherwise. Regarding the level of satisfaction derived from overall ministry accomplishments, again 87.2% expressed some level of agreement, while only 12.8% disagreed with the statement. Yet when considering effectiveness in light of influencing others toward effective ministries of their own, only 70% indicated they were successful “about half the time” or more frequently. Another 21.4% reported this result as either “Rarely” or “Uncertain,” with 8.6% reporting “less than half the time.” On the other hand, 42.9% indicate passing the torch of effective ministry to others is a regular occurrence for them.

### *Spiritual Life Practices*

Listening<sup>4</sup> to the field missionaries’ spiritual disciplines and practices will occur along the lines of the Word, Prayer, and Reflection. Under each focus both the frequency and character responses will be integrated to gain a global perspective. The qualitative responses will be considered together as they reflect the practices of the missionaries.

#### Practices focusing on the Word

Most GEM field missionaries are committed to the Scriptures and it is a part of their staple diet. They engage in daily devotions roughly 4-7 days a week, reading the Word for between 10 and 30 minutes, and this is done by roughly 70% of the personnel. About

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<sup>4</sup> Q30 had an n = 69, indicating one individual did not respond to this question. All questions were soft-required, so the respondent could, if persistent, move forward through the instrument.

25% spend more time reading their Bibles a day than the majority, while roughly 7% spend less time. The mode for reading the Word during devotions is between 10 and 20 minutes, and appears to be closer to the upper end. The intake of the Word of God far exceeds the North American cultural levels reported by PEW, but they do comport well with the study Parshall did on missionaries in the late 1980s.<sup>5</sup>

With regard to studying the Bible for personal reasons, 62.3% of respondents indicated doing this a few times a week or more, while 36.1% do it “about once a week” or less. As to frequency of studying the Word for ministry preparation, 67.2% of the responding missionaries do it “about once a week” or more often, while only 22.9% indicated “a few times a month.” Interestingly enough, 62.9% of those who completed the survey indicated they rarely memorized Scripture, with only 21.5% engaging in the discipline “about once a week” or more often. The frequency of reading the Bible meditatively, that is interactively with the Spirit of God or to hear from God, had a response rate of 67.1% for those who engaged the discipline “a few times a week” or more often, but the majority engages in meditation over the Word less than daily. GEM field missionaries responding to “How often you read the Bible reflectively (considering your life’s alignment with the Word)?” indicated at a 70% rate that they engaged in that discipline “a few times a week” or more regularly, while 30% do it less frequently. GEM field personnel are listening to the Word and the God of the Word in their Bible intake.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, Religious Beliefs and Practices: Diverse and Politically Relevant June 2008,” *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, directed by Luis Lugo (June, 2008), <http://religions.pewforum.org/> (accessed December 10, 2009), 49, and Phil Parshall, “How Spiritual Are Missionaries?” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1987), 1.

<sup>6</sup> John 5:39 — and “testify about Me.”

## Practices focusing on Prayer

As with the Word, prayer is planned and regular with the missionaries. Most (70%) again reported spending 10 to 30 minutes praying during devotions, with 8.5% spending more time and 21.4% spending less and doing this at a frequency of 4-7 days a week. The mode for the amount of time spent in prayer and Bible reading as reported by the respondents is 10 to 20 minutes for each discipline during devotions. This practice among GEM's missionaries exceeds by far that which is normal in the North American Culture today.

Rather than use the term contemplative prayer, which may have been confusing for most, the question asked how often the respondents spent time just "feeling" or being in God's presence, with 58.5% reported doing so "a few times a week" or more often, and 15.7% reporting "rarely." Interestingly enough, 10% indicated engaging the discipline more than "more than once a day." Similarly, conversation with God (speaking and listening) is practiced "about once a day or more" by 28.6% of the respondents, while 72.4% do it a few times a week or less, with 27.1% engaging only "a few times a month" or less. In requesting from God guidance for decision, 64.3% of field missionaries who responded, indicated doing so at least "once a day" or more, with 35.6% stating "a few times a week" or less.<sup>7</sup>

Roughly 95.6% of respondents indicated they intercede for others "a few times a week" or more, with 27.1% indicating they do it more than once a day. The honesty is appreciated as only 47.1% indicated that they spend time praying for God's desires

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<sup>7</sup> Guidance is engaged at a rate much less than the Biblical concept of "pray with out ceasing" or "those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (1 Thess 5:17, Rom 8:14), which indicate a constant process with God.

“about once a day” or more, whereas 52.9% reported a frequency of “a few times a week” or less. This appears to be lagging in the grasp of the first portion of the Lord’s prayer and Matthew’s injunction to seek first the Kingdom, so it gives pause for thought and may indicate, as with other responses, a latent presence of a worldview that does not permit the Biblical standard, but does so subconsciously (Enlightenment Modernism). This appears to be supported by the fact that listening to God in proportion to speaking to Him, as reported by most respondents (68.5%) is not their practice, while 31.5% share that they do.<sup>8</sup>

The missionaries who completed the survey indicate 52.8% agree that maintaining intimacy with Christ comes easy, yet another 47.1% state they are challenged with consistency, and 77.1% of the responses indicate some level of difficulty. Regarding their devotional life, 40% find it difficult to maintain regularly, while 60% indicate they don’t find it difficult. An interestingly large number (67.2%) desire help in maintaining consistent intimacy with Christ, while 32.8% don’t. Clearly there is a hunger for more and deeper experiences of God indicated in the responses of the missionaries and some may simply need help in opening up their worldview to permit that to be the case.

#### Practices focusing on Reflection

Silence and Solitude are not practiced frequently among GEM’s field missionaries.<sup>9</sup>

Consistent with that, Spiritual retreat defined as at least a 24 hour period spent

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<sup>8</sup> However, this does measure the level of interaction they expect from God and it is minimal, indicating that worldview may be at issue and not permitting a fully orbbed biblical supernaturalism of an intimately personal God.

<sup>9</sup> Responding to the discipline of silence, 38.6% of GEM respondents engage in the practice “a few times a week” or more, with 45.3% doing it “a few times a month” or “rarely.” Solitude, on the other hand, is practiced “a few times a month” or more often by 55.8% of GEM respondents, with 44.3% reporting doing it “rarely.”

exclusively with God, is probably the least practiced discipline among the respondents as 67.1% indicated they engaged with this practice only “rarely,” but 32.9% report doing it “about once a year” or slightly more often. Like Retreat, fasting for spiritual purposes is generally not practiced, as 44.3% reported engaging the discipline “rarely” and only 15.7% employ the discipline “about once a month” or more often.<sup>10</sup> Apart from the normal evangelical routines, most reflective spiritual disciplines are practiced less regularly than those regarding the Word and Prayer, even though reflective disciplines utilize both at times. Among the reflective disciplines, gratitude is an exception as respondents are thankful, indicating that 75.7% express gratitude to God for His blessings “about once a day” or more, with another 25.4% expressing it “a few times a week” or less often. Expressing love for God to Him is done by 40% of respondents “about once a day” or more often, the remainder do it much less often in contrast to gratitude. Regarding celebrating God’s activity in the missionary’s life, only 22.9% do this “about once a day,” and 28.6% report a frequency of “a few times a month,” whereas the majority do it “about once a week or more often.” Only 41.4% actually practice journaling, but do so at a frequency of “about once a day” or “a few times a month.”<sup>11</sup> Each of these disciplines displays a low expectation of the interactive presence of God (hinting at worldview plausibility issues).

Worship, Communion and Sabbath are practiced with normal regularity for Evangelicals, but it appears the item focusing on personal worship was interpreted more in line with the corporate idea as only 24% indicated they worshipped “about once a

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<sup>10</sup> Roughly 40% report doing it once to “few times a year.”

<sup>11</sup> Most GEM respondents “rarely” journal (58.6%).

day.” Sabbath may not be exercised as disengagement for refreshing with God and others, but the survey item presented it as “a day distinctly different from others.” The level of response indicating a near weekly frequency creates the question.

About 55.7% of field personnel indicate they are fairly adept at recognizing the leadership of the Holy Spirit and 44.3% indicate it is an area of challenge for them. More interesting is that in light of the preceding only 38.5% consider themselves adept at obeying God’s leading, while 61.5% consider it a challenge. The questions deal with the familiarity of God’s experienced presence and the ability to respond accordingly. Consequently, there appears to be hidden in the responses a total reliance on the rational to discern, rather than admitting the emotional, intuitive and relational pathways of knowledge to influence. Here again one might see the overall impact of the Enlightenment exerting a subconscious influence.

The vast majority of respondents indicated (87.1%) they have a friendship with someone who helps them to grow spiritually.<sup>12</sup> They also indicate at near the same level (75.7%) that they allowed other Christians to hold them accountable for spiritual growth, yet 24.3% shared they did not.

The responses to intentionally initiating with others to share the gospel gives pause since 75.7% respond in agreement, yet the frequency of sharing the good news is done at a rate of “a few times month” or less frequently by 72.9% of field personnel. The frequency mitigates against the expressed intentionality of the respondents. It may also

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<sup>12</sup> This was intended as a spiritual direction question, but it was not asked that way due to the lack of familiarity with that idea among Evangelicals. So I don’t believe this question gets at the depth of growth that can be provided by an insightful friend who is familiar with the Kingdom of God and the ways in which God is currently working. However, the responses are consistent with the Impact Field Leaders Survey mentioned in Chapter 1, which also had similarities to the findings here regarding retreat and Sabbath.

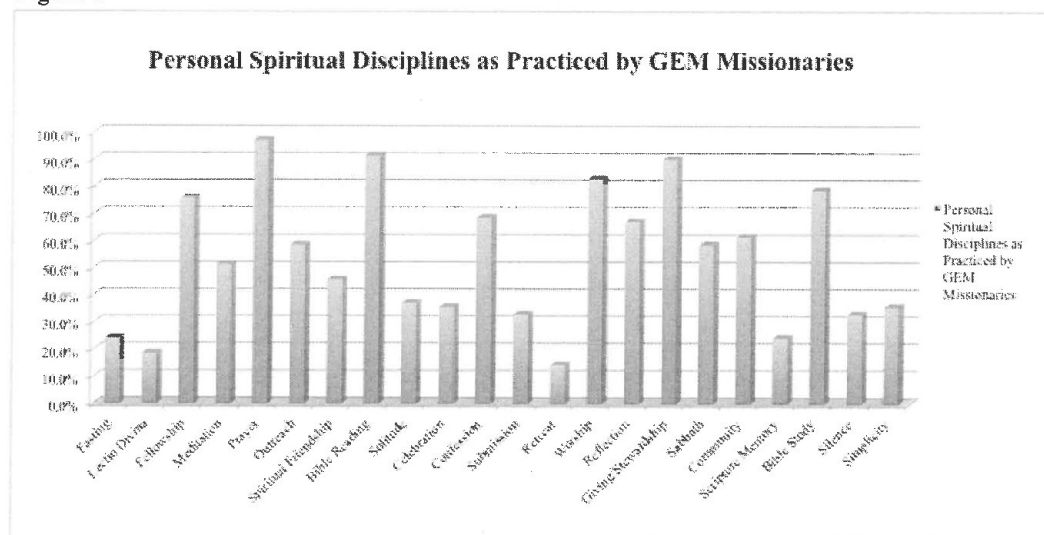
point to a strong “salvationist” mindset regarding the gospel as lacking benefit for this world, or rather a lack of a deep and compelling experience of God and His presence by the missionary.<sup>13</sup>

With regard to financial stewardship, GEM respondents are generous, with the overwhelming majority giving both regularly and sacrificially.

### Summary of Respondents Self-Reports

Rather than list the disciplines indicated by the survey takers as regularly practiced personally and in community, the charts have been included (Figures 1 and 2). The practices selected reflect the percentage of the respondents engaging in those exercises on a regularly planned and intentional basis reflecting “a habit” or “discipline.”

**Figure 1**

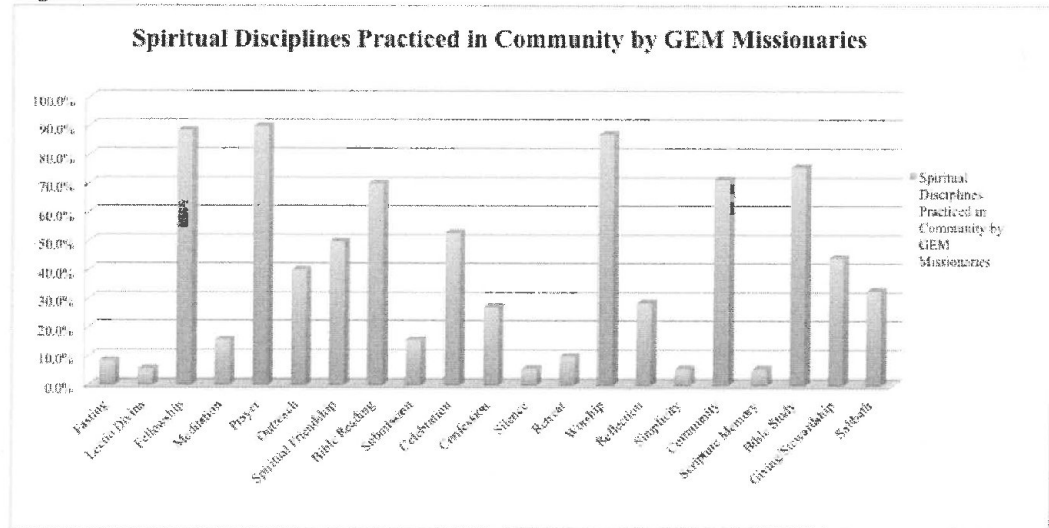


<sup>13</sup> The essence of this is that the missionary believes the Bible and its truths, including the gospel, but has not been introduced to the “way” of Jesus who interacted consistently with God and knew His ways (Jn 5:19). Paul expresses a similar concept in Ephesians culminating in 6:10-20, which is not so much about armor as it is about living in the perspective God has toward you and His very presence/protection being with you, which is what the armor is about.



Generally speaking for both the personal and community disciplines, those that either have a strong reflective component or expectation of God's interaction are practiced at lower rates among the GEM respondents.

**Figure 2**



With regard to the three most beneficial disciplines that the respondents regularly practice, 85% mentioned Bible reading, 75.7% indicated some form of prayer; 30% pointed toward worship; 24.2% mentioned fellowship/community; 10% meditation; 10% outreach; 7.1% reflection; 7.1% giving; silence 7.1%, confession 5.7%, and all others less than 5%.<sup>14</sup> This is both consistent with the data thus far presented and also indicative of general evangelical culture, which shows a lack of both familiarity and practice of most of the reflective disciplines and of the various forms of praying. Moreover, those practiced do not reflect the interactivity of a real relationship with God, but rather a more planned approach to the spiritual life (less spontaneously receptive).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Solitude 4.3%; Retreat 1.4%, Journaling 4.3%, Sabbath 1.4%, Fasting 2.9%, Submission 1.4%.

<sup>15</sup> In the author's opinion, these disciplines reflect the empirical nature of the Enlightenment worldview where non-supernaturalism is emphasized along with that which is noticeable by the 5 senses and other forms of knowledge are relegated to the sidelines (relational, intuitive, emotional, spiritual, and religious).

The corollary then is found in the listing of the three disciplines not practiced at all from the respondents: Lectio Divina, 43%, fasting 40%, scripture Memory 37.1%, retreat 24.3%, silence 20%, simplicity 17.1%, submission 11.4%, spiritual friendship 10%, solitude 5.7%, confession 5.7%. Everything else was mentioned less than 5%.<sup>16</sup> Many of those listed here are among the reflective, interactive with God group of disciplines, showing a lack of familiarity with practices that include a sense of the supernatural presence of God<sup>17</sup> and the fullness of what Jesus meant by Kingdom.<sup>18</sup>

The last two questions dealt with practices that brought the respondents the most intimacy with Christ. Just changing the question in this way (as compared with Q55) created a series of replies that lend great insight in to the respondent's experience of their relationship with God. Here are a few samples, so as to give a feel for content, "The "silence of beholding" and communion with God bring me the greatest sense of intimacy with God. It's like my soul becomes entangled with Him for brief moments." Or "Reflecting on scripture, pondering it, creating hymns based on it, and in so doing, suddenly the Holy Spirit takes over, reveals the deeper, the overwhelming, in the truth about His love, His plan, both universally and in my life." And this statement, "Worship with music brings me closer to Christ than anything else. I can let myself feel the words and praise God without too much to hinder it." In each of these, there is a hidden sense of

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<sup>16</sup> Celebration 4.3%, Meditation 4.3%, Journaling, 2.9%, Outreach 1.4%.

<sup>17</sup> This was anticipated as indicated on page 10 of Chapter 1, as Evangelicals generally emphasize the more cognitive and rational disciplines.

<sup>18</sup> "The very fact that *heaven* could be used to refer to God at all is deeply instructive of how God relates to us, once you realize what "the heavens" are. It tells exactly where God is in relation to the human world." Willard mentions this after demonstrating for a number of pages that the Kingdom of Heaven is not far off, but all around us and available for vinteraction as that is the space from which God speaks. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, April, 1998), 74.

their emotive expression. Other statements were more to the point, and obviously, the Bible and prayer were mentioned a number of times, but also Silence, Solitude, Retreat, Journaling, Contemplative Prayer, Outreach, Listening to God, Reflective Bible Reading, Worship, Singing, etc. So there is a portion of GEM field missionaries with a much more interactive approach to God and expectant of His response.

On the other hand, the winner for the being the greatest hindrance was “busyness” stated in many different ways: “Being too busy, becoming distracted easily” or “Lack of time” or “Normal daily life with all of my responsibilities. The enemy.” Statements like these are replete throughout the responses answering what the greatest hindrances to intimacy with God are. A few others worthy of note, were lack of discipline (inherent in the too busy comments), sin struggles and expectations.

### **Uncovering the Potential of Spiritual Formation**

The survey data reveal there is both room to grow and nurture a deeper experience of God and a longing for greater richness with Him from among GEM field respondents.<sup>19</sup> In moving toward that end by statistical analysis, it is necessary to mention the ceiling effect<sup>20</sup> did occur with this data sample for the Spiritual Well Being Scale. As such, the study proceeded on the assumption of the *Central Limit Theorem* (CLT) in statistics, which indicates that samples with an  $n > 30$  can be assumed to be *approximately* normal.<sup>21</sup> In the case of the sample under study here,  $n = 70$ , meeting the necessary criteria.

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<sup>19</sup> A more detailed description of the statistical analysis is available upon request.

<sup>20</sup> Since the goal of this study is to discover whether spiritual life practices do noticeably affect spiritual well-being, it is assumed that this study will be minimally affected by the ceiling effect noted in other studies.

<sup>21</sup> Rumsey, *Statistics for Dummies*, 170. “If X has any distribution that is *not* normal, or if it is

## Differences Between Demographic Groups in GEM

There were no differences noted between those in GEM organizational leadership and GEM field missionaries with regard to SWBS and its sub-scales, or *Effectiveness* or *Retention*. All other comparison tests regarding Formal Theological Education, Level of Education Attained, Life Decade, Terms of Service on the Field, did not reflect any differences among the sub-groups at a statistically significant level ( $p < 0.05$ ) either for randomly selected survey items or any of the indices constructed (*Retention*, *Effectiveness*, SPI, SPWo, SPPr, SPRef, RtGI), except when comparing Terms of Service with *Effectiveness*. In that case a statistically significant comparison at  $p = 0.032 < 0.05$ , between those serving 9-12 years versus 16+ years, with the indicated means being 8.75 and 10.829, respectively. Those serving 9-12 years, have considerably more insecurity about their perception of their ministry effectiveness, whereas those serving 16+ years have less. In either case, the means are well below the possible total (18) of complete satisfaction and effectiveness. In order to really test the significance any of these population factors have from among GEM missionaries, a significantly larger sample size than  $n = 70$  is necessary. The subgroups generally had small sample sizes ( $n < 15$ ), making the comparisons less reliable.

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unknown, you can't automatically say the mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) has a normal distribution. But incredibly, you can use a normal distribution to approximate the distribution of  $\bar{X}$ — if the sample size is large enough. This momentous result is due to what statisticians know and love as the *Central Limit Theorem*. ... The *Central Limit Theorem* (abbreviated *CLT*) says that if  $X$  does *not* have a normal distribution (or the distribution is unknown and hence can't be deemed normal), the shape of the sampling distribution of  $\bar{X}$  is *approximately* normal, as long as the sample size,  $n$ , is large enough. That is, you get an *approximate* normal distribution for the means of large samples, even if the distribution of the original values ( $X$ ) is *not* normal.... Most statisticians agree that if  $n$  is at least 30, this approximation will be reasonably close in most cases, although different distribution shapes of  $X$  have different values of  $n$  that are needed. The larger the sample size ( $n$ ), the closer the distribution of the sample means will be to the normal distribution."

However, with regard to men and women, there were differences noted between men and women for SWBS and its sub scales (EWB, RWB). For both genders the sample size was sufficiently large to compare the means. Women generally had higher means than men, and for the SWB scale the difference spanned 8.03 intervals and was statistically significant.<sup>22</sup> For the EWB and RWB sub-scales, the means differed by 4.23 and 3.8, respectively and were statistically significant.<sup>23</sup> Women always had the higher mean, and Bufford indicated that a difference of 5 on the SWB scale or of 3 on either the EWB or the RWB sub-scales is significant.<sup>24</sup> No other differences were noted between men and women that were statistically significant, including *Retention* and *Effectiveness*.

As it concerns the observational data, there are a number of interesting tendencies of the genders that obviously contribute to those differences in means. First, men more regularly than women and for longer periods read and study their Bibles. They do it for personal study and ministry preparation more often as well. Women do read the Bible regularly, but generally for less time and less frequently, probably more due to family responsibilities. However, Women as a whole are more interactive in their relationship with God as seen through the disciplines. Women are more prone to meditate over Scripture, to journal, to engage in silence and solitude, and even more active in outreach. Men do these things as well, so it is a matter of degree, but men appear to be more planned in their approach to God and women more spontaneous. Women tend to thank

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<sup>22</sup> For men and women  $n = 35$  and the mean for men was 101.23 and for women it was 109.26 at  $p = 0.004 < 0.05$ . There was no overlap in their intervals either.

<sup>23</sup>  $n = 35$  for both genders, EWB, women had a mean of 52.89, for men, 48.66 at  $p = 0.008$ ; for RWB, women had a mean of 56.37, for men it was 52.57 at  $p = 0.007$ .

<sup>24</sup> R. K. Bufford, R. F. Paloutzian and C. W. Ellison, "Norms for the Spiritual Well-Being Scale," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 19, no. 1 (1991): 64.

God more often, celebrate His activity in their life, express their love to Him, wait on a response from Him in prayer, and memorize Scripture more (probably so they can take it with them in their day). However, men are more likely to take a spiritual retreat, even though that is a rarely practiced discipline in GEM. Both men and women engage in spiritually encouraging friendships, but women do it at a higher rate than men. As well, women more readily recognize the leading of the Holy Spirit and indicate they more easily obey God. Women indicate at a significantly higher rate that daily intimacy with God comes easily for them, probably indicating that they are more at ease in expressing their hearts to God. Yet men and women tend to not spend equal amounts of time listening to God as talking with Him, and both genders express roughly the same level of difficulty in maintaining intimacy with Jesus as well as the desire for help in that area.<sup>25</sup>

So as it concerns the differences in means regarding the SWB and its sub scales, it appears that a higher degree of interaction through the day accounts for the difference between men and women. This would point to encouraging men grow in their daily spontaneity with God (24/7 conscious awareness) as they tend to be more planned and task oriented in their spiritual disciplines. These differences may also simply flow from women having more negotiable time for relationships in their day and men having more formal ministry responsibilities.

### Discovering the Influence of Spiritual Formation

Even though employing the CLT here, the evaluation of the data (All Questions) in histograms with 5 different normality tests, were generally not unanimous in their

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<sup>25</sup> This analysis follows from reports run for Gender in SurveyGizmo and Box Plots computed in MiniTab 16. Most similarities were not mentioned, since differences are being discussed between the genders and their approach to God.

conclusions as to accept or reject normality. However, when reviewing the totals for SWBS and its sub-scales, for the missionary population of GEM, they were all skewed left, meaning that their mean scores were less than the median scores. When looking at the indices SPI, SPWo, SPPr, SPRef, RtGI, they all were detected as being normal in their distributions, with a minor exception with SPI. For the indices *Retention* and *Effectiveness*, the greater weight of the normality tests indicated to reject a normal distribution, with the histogram for *Effectiveness* reflecting a more normal bell curve with an interesting frequency distribution (not symmetric), and the histogram for *Retention* was skewed right as well as having a non-symmetrical frequency distribution.<sup>26</sup> The sample size indicates the outcomes herein can only *approximate* real results because *n* is large enough.<sup>27</sup>

#### Discerning the Level of Influence Spiritual Practices Express

The linearity of a relationship is discerned by both graphs (scatter plots) and correlations coefficients. In order to expedite the process, the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (*r*) were determined first. Those that fit the criteria of  $r > 0.40$  while having a  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ , were selected for presentation and continued study. Variables that at least exert a moderate influence on SWB, EWB, RWB, *Retention* or *Effectiveness* as indicated

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<sup>26</sup> Box-plots for all the indices were generally symmetrical, with the medians more or less in the center of the presented distribution for the indices, however, the RWB, SPI, SPWo, *Retention* and *Effectiveness* indices reflected a certain degree of asymmetry in the data. With SPI, the asymmetry appears minimal, but SPWo, *Retention*, *Effectiveness* and RWB the asymmetry is fairly obvious. A check on the Box-plots was performed, and while the mentioned asymmetry was present in them, the normality indicator was unanimous regarding that condition in accepting it for all the Spiritual Practices Indices (SPI, SPWo, SPPr, SPRef, RtGI). At the same time, the indices SWB, RWB, EWB, *Retention* and *Effectiveness* were rejected for normality.

<sup>27</sup> This is a tenet of the Central Limit Theorem. Further, since the goal of this study is to discover whether spiritual life practices do noticeably affect spiritual well-being, it is assumed that this study will be minimally impacted by the ceiling effect noted in previous studies among populations similar to GEM.

by their correlation coefficients, will be examined visually to discern if linearity is present.

A number of the variables (Q26-52, Q57-68), had both positive<sup>28</sup> and weak to moderate Pearson's Correlation Coefficients,  $r < 0.30$ , thus not strong enough to make the selection for further investigation. Table 5-1 shows the correlation coefficients for the survey items that had an  $r > 0.40$  with SWB, RWB, EWB at  $p < 0.05$ . There were no correlation coefficients that met the requirement for selection in relationship to *Effectiveness* and *Retention* in the data. Most variables reflected an  $r < 0.30$  if there was a correlation at  $p < 0.05$ , which indicates weak relationship between the survey items and *Effectiveness* and *Retention*. Some disciplines did correlate with both *Effectiveness* and *Retention* near or slightly above the generally accepted weak to moderate threshold of  $r < 0.30$ , thus just under the predetermined criteria.<sup>29</sup> All variables that correlated did so positively with either *Effectiveness* or *Retention* at a  $p < 0.05$ , had a range between  $0.24743 \leq r \leq 0.35983$ . So spiritual life practices, at least some of them may exhibit a weak influence upon *Effectiveness* and *Retention*, but not enough for the purposes of this study. However, as is shown in Table 5-1, Q21, which has to do with the desire of a GEM missionary to return to his field of service after HMA, did reveal a moderate correlation with both SWB and EWB,<sup>30</sup> indicating some sort of relationship with *Retention*. Since

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<sup>28</sup> One assumption is that spiritual disciplines/practices should have a positive correlation or none, with spiritual well-being, *Effectiveness* and *Retention*. It may in fact be possible for a spiritual practice to have a negative correlation, but the literature on the spiritual life does not seem to indicate that, nor did the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients that resulted at  $p < 0.05$ .

<sup>29</sup> at  $p < 0.05$ , *Effectiveness* weakly correlated with Q49, Sabbath,  $r = 0.29915$ ; Q62, Submission,  $r = 0.27318$ ; Q64, Stewardship,  $r = 0.35983$ ; for *Retention*, Q43, Celebration/Gratitude,  $r = 0.25757$ ; Q59, Obedience/Reflection,  $r = 0.24743$ ; Q64, Stewardship,  $r = 0.25109$ ; Q66, Discipline,  $r = 0.283$ .

<sup>30</sup> Q21's correlations:  $r = 0.40409$  (SWB) and  $r = 0.4208$  (EWB).



Q21 creates the retention index, no further investigation of it will be made, but it does present an interesting issue for future study since some influence and relationship is indicated.

Table 5-1  
**Pearson's Correlation Coefficients**

<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Spiritual Practice</i>	<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>EWB</i>	<i>RWB</i>	<i>SWB</i>
Q21	Retention	I intend to return to my mission field after my next home ministry assignment.	0.4208	<del>0.31955</del>	0.40409
Q37	Prayer/Guidance	How often do you ask God for guidance in making decisions?	<del>0.19917</del>	0.45535	<del>0.34562</del>
Q42	Submission	How often do you spend time praying for what God desires rather than what you desire?	<del>0.33657</del>	0.59615	0.49607
Q43	Celebration/Gratitude	How often do you thank God for His blessings?	0.41957	0.48501	0.48737
Q44	Celebration/Worship	How often do you express how much you love God to Him?	0.4654	0.53164	0.53738
Q47	Celebration	How often do you celebrate what God is doing in your life?	0.52149	0.48918	0.54807
Q58	Reflection	I easily recognize the leadership of the Holy Spirit in my life.	0.4468	<del>0.36806</del>	0.44366
Q60	Discipline/Time	Maintaining consistent daily intimacy with Christ comes easy for me.	0.47994	0.56385	0.56209
Q63	Outreach	I intentionally initiate relationships with non-believers so I can share the gospel.	<del>0.33677</del>	0.47103	0.43268
Q65	Stewardship/Giving	I regularly give of my finances to further the work of God's Kingdom.	0.49764	<del>0.29007</del>	<del>0.29007</del>
SPI	All Disciplines	Index Total for Spiritual Practices Items	0.47123	0.58866	0.56968
SPPr	Prayer	Prayer Discipline Index	<del>0.35663</del>	0.56013	0.48932
SPRef	Reflection	Reflection Discipline Index	0.49993	0.52263	0.55266
RtGI	Practicing the Presence	Responsiveness to God Index	0.41976	0.55517	0.52309

*p* < 0.05

What is interesting from the table, is that all of the Spiritual Practices Indices, except the one focused on the Word correlated with SWB and its sub scales. This indicates that variety is important in the exercise of spiritual disciplines, which Leffel is advocating as well in his articles on integrating spiritual formation, both the *apophatic* and *kataphatic* traditions, with the practice of psychology.<sup>31</sup>

### Seeing the Connection

Upon review of the scatter plots,<sup>32</sup> only survey items Q42 (with RWB), Q47 (with SWB), and Q60 (with SWB), will be evaluated further. The indices (SPI, SPPr, SPRef

<sup>31</sup> G. Michael Leffel, "Emotion and Transformation in the Relational Spirituality Paradigm Part 2. Implicit Morality and "Minimal Prosociality,"" *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 4 (2007): 288-290.

<sup>32</sup> Due to the fact this study seeks correlations that are from moderate to strong ( $0.40 \leq r \leq 1$ ), the scatter plots may be vague in their representation of linearity, but it should at least appear to exist. In the graphs created for the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients in Table 5-1, the ones relating to the specific questions were difficult to discern, but those at or near  $r = 0.50$  generally gave the appearance of a line, if one allows for the ceiling effect of the SWBS and only 6 intervals of differentiation for each question. For certain questions, the interpretation of correlation on a scatter plot is an art, not a science, especially when looking at moderate strength levels in  $r$ .

and RtGI) were reviewed on scatter plots as well, and all gave very clear impressions of linearity with SWBS and at least one of its sub-scales.

A few things have been established in relationship to the hypotheses stated in the discussion of this project and its design. Based on the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients at an  $r > 0.40$  with a  $p < 0.05$ , nine of the survey items of items correlated with SWBS or one of its sub-scales (see Table 5-1), and the majority correlated with the SWB scale with coefficients ranging from  $0.40409 \leq r \leq 0.56209$  for that index. As for the Spiritual Life Practice Indices, all but SPWo reflected correlations with SWB and at least one of its sub-scales, with coefficients ranging  $0.41976 \leq r \leq 0.58866$  with a  $p < 0.05$ . Consequently there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and state that the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) has merit, and that there is a relationship between spiritual life practices and spiritual well-being.

On other hand, there is enough evidence to conclude the null hypotheses ( $H_0$ ) are still true for both *Effectiveness* and *Retention* since both the correlation coefficients and the scatter plots indicated otherwise. The relationship between spiritual life practices and these two indices is not correlated at an  $r > 0.40$  and  $p < 0.05$ , therefore the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is rejected. However, as noted in the determination of the correlation coefficients, some spiritual practices do begin to exert a moderate influence, just not strong enough to meet the threshold required here. Moreover, with *Retention* some sort of modest relationship exists with it and spiritual well-being as indicated by the correlation coefficient regarding the missionary's desire to return to the field.

## Confirming the Influence of Spiritual Formation Practices

Through the previous analyses, it was concluded that Q42, Q47, Q60, SPI, SPPr, SPRef and RtGI should be examined further by linear regression to see if there is a more directly influential, but not causative relationship.<sup>33</sup> So linear regression analysis was done for the items noted, and presented in Table 5-2.<sup>34</sup>

### Linear Regression Analysis

Table 5-2

SWB					
<i>Item/Index</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (adj)	<i>p</i>
SPI	9.75948	0.56480	31.9%	30.9%	0.000
SPRef	9.83147	0.55588	30.9%	29.8%	0.000
RtGI	10.1151	0.51769	26.8%	25.7%	0.000
SPPr	10.3271	0.48683	23.7%	22.6%	0.000
Q47	9.99148	0.53479	28.6%	27.5%	0.000
Q60	9.93528	0.54222	29.4%	28.4%	0.000

$p < 0.05$

RWB					
<i>Item/Index</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (adj)	<i>p</i>
SPI	4.87929	0.58395	34.1%	33.1%	0.000
SPRef	5.11098	0.52631	27.7%	26.6%	0.000
RtGI	5.01968	0.54955	30.2%	29.2%	0.000
SPPr	4.99024	0.55678	31.0%	30.0%	0.000
Q42	4.80477	0.60083	36.1%	35.1%	0.000

$p < 0.05$

EWB					
<i>Item/Index</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (adj)	<i>p</i>
SPI	5.98765	0.46797	21.9%	20.7%	0.000
SPRef	5.854	0.50299	25.3%	24.2%	0.000
RtGI	6.15931	0.41593	17.3%	16.1%	0.000

$p < 0.05$

As can be seen by the table, the stronger relationships are with the variables that influence the RWB scale by looking at the  $R^2$  value, which explains the amount of

<sup>33</sup> Causation would need another entirely different and more controlled study. The goal is to discern whether there is a level of predictability in spiritual life practices that can help explain (not cause) the changes in the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and its sub-scales (EWB and RWB), based on the correlation coefficients and the scatter plots.

<sup>34</sup> The  $r$  (Pearson's Correlation Coefficient) values are slightly different in these tables, since they are derived from the regressions with a fit intercept.

variability in the RWB values by the linear model, and most are above 30%. With the other two indices (SWB and EWB), the  $R^2$  values are generally less than 30% with the ability to explain the variability in EWB values the weakest. As to the fit of the linear model determined by the single variables,  $R^2$  (adj. = adjusted) addresses that, and the higher the number the better the fit.<sup>35</sup> The regressions, consequently, do not predict very well the value of SWB, RWB, or EWB, nor should they since they are only focusing on one aspect that influences spiritual well-being, but they are statistically significant and a relationship between the variables does exist as seen by the *p-values*, which are all less than 0.05.

Generally speaking, in the linear regressions between spiritual life and well-being, the indices combining a variety of disciplines exerted a more substantial influence. This implies that quite possibly, certain combinations of disciplines together may exert even a stronger influence than indicated by the ones shown in the preceding Tables.

#### Seeking Spiritual Disciplines that May Exert Stronger Influence on Spiritual Well-Being

The purpose here is to determine whether any model from among the spiritual practice items could suggest a more powerful influence on spiritual well-being. The result will only be suggestive, but the results could produce some interesting insights and provide a template for refining the inquiry outlined in this thesis project.<sup>36</sup> The idea for

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<sup>35</sup> In multiple regression models,  $R^2$  (adj.) also adjusts for the number of variables present and as a result decreases in size to account for each new variable. In these regressions, only one variable was used, and both  $R^2$  and  $R^2$  (adj.) are substantially less than 0.70, which is the boundary where a strong model fit would be seen and the amount of variability not accounted for by the input variable would be small, as seen by a lower *S*, which measures the standard distance data values fall from the regression line.

<sup>36</sup> There are limitations in MiniTab 16 regarding a best subsets analysis, since the study contains 39 contributors to the variable matrix for spiritual life practices and MiniTab 16 limits a best subsets regression to a maximum of 31 variables. The number of variables was reduced by considering the range of variables that contained the highest Pearson's Correlation Coefficients from the survey items. One variable

this results from majority of the Spiritual Life Indices having significant influence on spiritual well-being due to representing a group of practices (survey items). Table 5-3 presents the results and reflects the survey items delineating the variables used to create it.

**Table 5-3 Best Subsets Regression on SWB**

Variables	$R^2$	$R^2$ (adj.)	Mallows C-p	S	
14	64.2%	54.3%	0.10	7.9341	
Variable	Number	Survey Items			
1	Q31	How often do you study the Bible for ministry preparation?			
2	Q34	How often do you read the Bible reflectively (considering your life's alignment with the Word)?			
3	Q35	How often do you spend time just "feeling" or being in God's presence?			
4	Q38	How often do you practice silence before God?			
5	Q41	How often do you spend time praying on behalf of others (intercession)?			
6	Q42	How often do you spend time praying for what God desires rather than what you desire?			
7	Q44	How often do you express how much you love God to Him?			
8	Q45	How often do you worship with other believers?			
9	Q47	How often do you celebrate what God is doing in your life?			
10	Q49	How often do you practice Sabbath as distinctly different from other days?			
11	Q58	I easily recognize the leadership of the Holy Spirit in my life.			
Const	Q60	Maintaining consistent daily intimacy with Christ comes easy for me.			
12	Q61	I spend as much time listening to God as I do talking to Him.			
13	Q63	I intentionally initiate relationships with non-believers so I can share the gospel.			
14	Q65	I regularly give of my finances to further the work of God's Kingdom.			

As can be seen, the best fit comprised 14 variables and the constant Q60. The coefficient of determination  $R^2$ , better explains the variability of SWB and the fit of the model substantially improved, as  $R^2$  (adj.) is much higher than in the single-variable regressions. Mallows C-p is very small at 0.10, and since it measures the amount of error left unexplained, the lower the better. Also  $S$ , which is a measure of standard deviation, has reduced from roughly 10 to less than 8. While the fit is improved, the implications of the general regression need to be further studied, which should be pursued in future

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had to be constant in the equations, and that was item Q60 from the survey since it had the highest correlation coefficient affecting SWBS as well as correlated with both the RWB and EWB sub-scales. Since survey items Q66-68 are evaluative of practice and Q26-30 generally had low correlation coefficients the intervening variables were those chosen, with Q60 being constant in all models produced by the analysis. This allowed the greatest openness for the regression results. The option for the "Fit Intercept" was selected.

research.<sup>37</sup> Since it is logical that spiritual life practices cannot alone account for all of the variability in SWBS, as a simple check, the suggested survey items were used to create a single variable and then tested in a simple one-variable linear regression. The results of the fit and the equation are represented in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4 **Linear Regression with Best Subsets Determined Variable**

<i>Equation</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> ( <i>adj.</i> )	<i>P</i>
SWB=65 + 0.676xBSubset	9.62404	33.70%	32.80%	0.000

*p* < 0.05

While the set of variables suggests a better fit than the previous combinations of spiritual life practices, it does not come close to a full explanation of the variation in SWB, nor should it. As described in the conceptualization of the SWB Scale,<sup>38</sup> there is much more to take into account than simply spiritual life practices. However, this outcome does suggest that certain combinations of spiritual disciplines may exert a more significant influence on well-being. It may even indicate that for different people, different combinations of the spiritual disciplines may enhance and deepen their experience of God and thus exert more or less influence on their spiritual well-being. In any case, at this point in the analysis it is clear that spiritual life practices do exert an

<sup>37</sup> From MiniTab 16. Equation: SWB = 61.4056 + 1.41632 Q31 + 0.744528 Q34 - 0.816846 Q35 + 0.937048 Q38 - 1.97052 Q41 + 2.77294 Q42 + 0.765044 Q44 - 2.4462 Q45 + 0.665065 Q47 - 1.59789 Q49 + 0.746515 Q58 + 3.24131 Q60 - 0.798557 Q61 + 1.47913 Q63 + 4.77878 Q65. Summary of Model: S = 7.93409, *R*<sup>2</sup> = 64.24%, *R*<sup>2</sup> (*adj.*) = 54.31%, PRESS = 5897.74, *R*<sup>2</sup> (*pred.*) = 37.96%. A few things to note: (1) there are 5 negative coefficients; (2) the fit and variability are much higher (so much improved than by any one variable); (3) it is logically untenable that spiritual life practices would account for this much of the variability in SWB or model fit; (4) negative coefficients are contrary to the positive correlations from among the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients; (5) this is suggestive of an attempt to over fit or correlate spiritual life practices with SWBS while at the same time suggesting variables that may explain the fit better as a combined single variable; (6) This is confirmed by the PRESS error value being large, and the predictive fit (*R*<sup>2</sup> (*pred.*)) being much smaller than (*R*<sup>2</sup> (*adj.*)). For these reasons, using a combined single variable is what was done here; however, it would be interesting to learn what further study might reveal.

<sup>38</sup> Craig W. Ellison, "Spiritual Well-Being: Conceptualization and Measurement," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 11, no. 4 (1983): 330-340.

important influence one's spiritual well-being, and therefore relate to one's real experience of God.

### **Kingdom Contagion**

The experience of God carried in the heart of the believer is the contagion to pass on to those around us. It provides the impetus for discipling the world because God in and of Himself is the blessing and the contagion. As a person is impressed with God's love, presence, heart, advocacy for humanity as seen and conveyed in Jesus, that person cannot but speak of that experience with others. Both the survey data and the statistical analysis of it indicate there is an experience of God to be had, deepened and enjoyed through the spiritual disciplines.

### **Surprises Along the Way**

The first surprise was the statistically discerned spiritual life disciplines that correlated with spiritual well-being indicated by the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (Table 5-1). As a set of statements, they are tremendously God-centered and focused, concerning seeking His guidance, praying for His heart's desires, thanking Him for His involvement in our lives or celebrating His activity with us. Amazingly interactive and present-minded with God were these spiritual practices and they were focused on His will, much like "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness"<sup>39</sup> and "Your will be done,"<sup>40</sup> things that are at the core of a Biblical worldview. It was surprising as well to see as continuing that theme, the emphasis on the leadership of the Holy Spirit and taking the initiative to share the gospel as among those results. Kingdom Expansion is included as impacting spiritual well-being. This author would have expected other things more

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<sup>39</sup> Matt 6:33

<sup>40</sup> Matt 6:10

static with regard to disciplines than active as those that correlate most, but these speak of a life continually lived before God, in this God-bathed world. “Living interactively with Jesus right here and now where the person is in his daily activity, that is where knowledge of Jesus is acquired.”<sup>41</sup> Paul would say, “in him we live and move and have our being,”<sup>42</sup> literally each individual is in the presence of God daily. It was amazing to see these practices as significantly correlated with spiritual well-being. The things that excite God about His followers (our focus on Him, His desires, heart and will) contribute to their overall sense of spiritual well-being. Imagine that, obedience is a blessing!

Further, it was tremendously surprising to see the variety present, and the range of singular disciplines that correlated, gratitude, guidance, submission, celebration, prayer, reflection, outreach. Each index of the spiritual life (with the exception of SPWo), representing a broad spectrum of spiritual practices, also correlated with spiritual well-being, indicating that a variety of spiritual practices are good for the soul. All of the indices that correlated had a strong interactive component, in other words an “experienced” presence of God idea within them, as one concerned reflection on God’s activity in life (SPRef), another concerned responsiveness to God (RtGI), and prayer too, which was not just static/stationary prayer, but also had interactive, celebration and conversational elements, as did the total spiritual life index (SPI), which included Bible reading, Bible Study, meditation, reflection, etc.

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<sup>41</sup> Dallas Willard, *Knowing Christ Today: Why We Can Trust Spiritual Knowledge* (New York, NY: Harper-Collins ebook, 2009), 139.

<sup>42</sup> Acts 17:28



Another surprise is that which also was a cause of consternation. Why did the composite of Bible disciplines not correlate well with SWB? First, there is a positive correlation with all three SWBS scales ( $r = 0.14538$  to  $0.23671$ ), but it is weak and did not meet the criteria. Second, the Bible is the staple diet of the sample! As such, it does not account for the variation of the well-being scales because the vast majority of the missionary respondents eat a daily diet of God's Word, which was also reported in the observational data. It was reported in relationship to daily devotions, as personal Bible study, ministry preparation, reflective and meditative Bible reading and in their self-reports. GEM respondents, as the majority reported, read their Bibles on average 4-7 days a week for 10 to 30 minutes and some for longer periods. So the Bible is essential as providing the context for spiritual formation and growth and developing the openness to a worldview that includes the supernatural Presence of God. So the Word is a constant (statistically speaking) that does not explain much of the variation in the SWB scales because most of the respondents regularly engage with the Word.

It was very interesting too, that the some of the highest SWBS scores among those reported, generally expressed an experiential component to their relationship with God in prayer, worship or Bible meditation, affirming the interactive component of a relationship with God and that it is truly a relationship to be experienced. However, it was equally surprising that among the missionary respondents, the majority really don't expect God to interact with them or reply as seen in the responses to certain survey items.<sup>43</sup> While the GEM respondents are light-years ahead of the general culture of North America as discussed regarding the problem and setting of this thesis, there are still latencies

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<sup>43</sup> Q36 and Q61 in particular, but others as well.

regarding the influence of the Enlightenment and Modernism that affect their expectation of the supernatural, ever-present God to interact with them. This is quite contrary to the Biblical worldview of “Immanuel...God with us”<sup>44</sup> and “lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age”<sup>45</sup> and “let us also walk by the Spirit.”<sup>46</sup> As with Kraft, there is an indication that the non-supernatural worldview of the Enlightenment (empiricism) remains with us, even as ardent followers of Jesus. The presence of the Enlightenment was also detected in the range of disciplines generally practiced by the missionary respondents, which reflected low levels of disciplines that have a more contemplative or reflective nature or emphasize “waiting on God,” such as silence, retreat, and *Lectio Divina*. God hasn’t changed His ways; He still wants His disciples walking *with* Him as in the Garden of Eden, but in relationship to the world in which they live today.

It is quite possible that this indicates a need to encourage openness to the reality of the biblical worldview presented in the Scriptures. As indicated in chapters 2 and 4, spiritual disciplines can impact Christ-followers at the deepest level, causing transformation in behavior, life and habit — even with their automatic responses. However, a person’s worldview can also be resistant to ideas that actually represent the fullness of reality as God intended.

A rather surprising insight concerned both the influence of outreach on spiritual well-being as indicated by the Pearson’s Correlations, and while some of the GEM respondents are actively engaged in outreach, the majority reported that they engaged in

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<sup>44</sup> Matt 1:23

<sup>45</sup> Matt 28:20

<sup>46</sup> Gal 5:25

outreach, or Kingdom expansion, less than a few times a month.<sup>47</sup> Many of the ministries within GEM are focused on equipping nationals, but it seemed these question should reflect greater incidence of practice. At the same time, it is quite interesting that both the Pearson's Correlations and the best subsets regression indicated outreach as having a positive influence on well-being. As such, this indicator has huge implications for contagious Kingdom expansion as well as inducing a sense of well-being for missionaries. Maybe it is because of being missionaries that this factor has such a potent influence on their spiritual well-being.

It was also very surprising to see the questions the best subsets regression indicated regarding those disciplines or practices that best account for the variability found in the Spiritual Well-Being scale. It was incredibly interesting to see some overlap with those suggested by the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients, but more so to see once again the interactive, God-centered side emphasized and the seeking of His desires. It is quite interesting that what has been emphasized in these results is that a focusing on God, His desires and His heart exerts a positive influence on us, which ultimately has great potential for Kingdom expansion.

The last item that was sort of surprising concerned how much busyness, activity, distractions, ministry, lack of discipline and lack of time affects the intimacy that the GEM missionary respondent's desire.<sup>48</sup> It was easy to detect a longing for greater intimacy and ways to do that in those statements. This may also evidence the need for an occasional Spiritual Retreat, which is lacking as a universal discipline among the

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<sup>47</sup> Q46, almost 3/4ths cf. Q63.

<sup>48</sup> Q70.

respondents.<sup>49</sup> Equally surprising was the readiness to admit that they need or want help in their intimacy with Jesus.<sup>50</sup> This is an invitation from God that cannot be ignored.

### **Spiritual Formation for Leading Missionaries**

As this study impacts the leading of missionaries, a number of things come to mind that would be wise to implement in practice. Many of these are already being practiced by this author as he engages with those he leads. The following are suggestive, and most are designed to shift the worldview of the missionary toward greater alignment with the fullness of the biblical worldview as it regards knowing and experiencing God. This list is not everything a leader can do to nurture the spiritual formation of those under his care, but it does provide pathways to fostering an environment that could lead to contagious Kingdom expansion.

(1) Missionaries are people with souls, who are made in the image of God and who have a deep desire to know Him. As leaders, engaging with field missionaries at the soul level is essential and it is neglected at the peril of the leader, missionary and the agency. Time must be taken to listen and explore their experience of God through prayer the Word, and life (Reflection).

(2) Pray with them when present and for them when absent. Do this on calls with them. Engage God with them and engage them with God. This will encourage a prayerful and expectant approach to much of what they do over time.

(3) Let them know there is an experience of God to be had beyond rational knowledge, but inclusive of it as well. Encourage an observant and reflective heart in the

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<sup>49</sup> Q52, Q53.

<sup>50</sup> Q 68, almost 2/3rds.

missionaries so as to increase their moment by moment awareness of God. Broaden their world into the largeness and presence of God and His universe. Foster an expectation of the real presence of God and His 24/7 invitations of love for them to join Him on mission.

(4) Encourage the more reflective sets of spiritual disciplines as discussed in these pages to be practiced, such as silence, solitude, contemplation, *Lectio Divina* or even regular journaling that allows them to focus on noticing God's presence. Explore with them their experience of those disciplines and the impact they have on their awareness of God's presence.

(5) Encourage missionaries to rest and take more regular retreats for the sake of their souls. Assist them in learning what it means to take Spiritual Retreats or to better engage in a pattern of Sabbath. From the survey responses, this is a real need so that the rhythms of rest assuage the anxiousness reflected the busyness and distractions that impact intimacy with God.

(6) Pro-actively work with the residual remains of the Enlightenment's influence on worldview for many missionaries. Do this by leading and loving them well, not correcting, but expressing the truth about ultimate reality and the biblical worldview including the supernatural.

(7) Encourage discipline in the disciplines — that is planned and regular use of some that are especially meaningful to the missionary. Consider encouraging them to write a rule of life that might give them a sense of the Kingdom of God as they approach their day.

(8) Emphatically state, in gracious ways, that spiritual disciplines or formation practices are for the purpose of meeting with God, and that includes things like evangelism, outreach and service, which are more difficult to understand in that way since they are activities too. This communicates God can be met everywhere and in everything that a missionary does. God is the purpose of the spiritual exercise, not the discipline itself.

(9) Seeking God and His purposes, His will and His ways, are not a duty but something from which Christ-followers too derive benefit. That is the conclusion of the statistical analysis regarding the correlations with well-being. Lead missionaries into the way God thinks of them and loves them daily, so they can understand ministry as an overflow not a task or a job.

(10) Assure missionaries that they can take time for their own soul care, no matter how much time is needed. Encourage a spacious environment for nurturing their spiritual growth and relationship with God. After all they are missionaries, so they actually need to commune with the One they represent and serve.

### **Implications for GEM**

First, while it is not directly related to the spiritual practices of GEM missionaries, among the respondents, most desire to remain on the field — that is clear from the observational data. Yet, 43% to 56% of respondents indicate some level of indefiniteness regarding remaining on the field. Since it appears there is no influential correlation of spiritual life practices with retention, other factors must exert a stronger influence, as it seems that this indefiniteness derives from things beyond the missionary's control, such as support issues, health, or extended family circumstances, etc. As such, it behooves

GEM to discover whether there is anything that can be done about it. The level of intensity of the struggle is more than likely minimal, but nonetheless it is present and important.

Secondly, it is clear that spiritual life practices generally enhance spiritual and overall well-being, so in looking at the future, it would be an excellent idea to foster an atmosphere that encouraged spending time with God more than just in devotions. In fact, this study indicates a need to raise the expectation of God's interactive presence with us. That is not to say such an atmosphere is not present in GEM, but to say that it is not intentionally cultivated across the board. It is more or less assumed, but as can be seen from the observational data, some disciplines are neglected that would mitigate against the "atmosphere" of busyness and activity and allow for respite in the presence of God. As well, active cultivation of the awareness of God's loving and advantageous (meaning advocating for His people) presence on an ongoing basis (like De Caussade, Laubach and Brother Lawrence) and programmatically building it into the mindset of the missionaries would be beneficial. The transformative impact of the disciplines, as discussed in previous chapters, in the pursuit of God, will also allay the impact of the Enlightenment worldview that dominates in the West and create a deeper awareness of God's activity, but sometimes this will require guidance from trusted others. Maybe adding a component to candidate orientation, pre-field processes, or home ministry welcome might help in cultivating the mindset/awareness of God's interactive availability 24/7. Leadership (field and international) can strive to more intentionally foster and nurture the developing of missionaries' spiritual lives while on the field and to legitimate the time they take to do it.

After all, the survey respondents clearly express a desire for help in maintaining or deepening their intimacy with Jesus.

Finally, while not explicitly covered in this study (although it was the subject of Q57 and Q62), actively providing for the availability of spiritual direction on the field for our missionaries may be of great benefit, so that the deeper pro-active walk in a conscious awareness of God and the invitations He is giving can be more readily perceived (apprehended) by our field missionaries. Actively cultivating that awareness may be the most significant practice to encourage in order to see contagious Kingdom Expansion break out. The insight of a trusted other can help in lowering the resistance a person's worldview can exert on being receptive to certain aspects of the reality of God's presence flowing legitimately from a biblical worldview.

Beyond that, the results of the study confirm the potential that if pro-active cultivation of the spiritual life is done through the disciplines in order to know God, for relationship with Him, the result will be a life overflowing with His presence that can lead to the passionate, contagious expansion of His Kingdom. As such, cultivating an environment in GEM that encourages as appropriate and fitting the nurture of the missionary's soul and spiritual life, will be important both to the missionary and the Kingdom of God. However, it needs to be stressed that doing the disciplines as religious exercises instead of in pursuit of God will mitigate against such a result. Spiritual formation practices are for the purpose of meeting, knowing, and relating to God personally and intimately.

### **Implications for Further Study**

With regard to further study, there are only a few things worthy of mention. First, the researcher-designed portion of the survey instrument of this study did not go through a



rigorous process of development, so the development of a tested instrument that could adequately capture the intangible impact of spiritual disciplines related to the Word, Prayer and Reflection would be beneficial.

While the SWBS is a worthy and accurate instrument as testified in the literature, there still remains a ceiling effect, which was evident in this study. However, the instrument can be improved to account for a greater differentiation at the upper end of the scale among conservatively religious groups. The task is a phenomenal challenge as the instrument is quite good. However, if two, maybe four questions could be added that touch on the emotional/affective/experiential aspects that are associated with deeper or stronger spiritual awareness of God and the experience of Him (Eph 1:18 or Eph 3:19 as points of reference as they lean toward the contemplative tradition), the scale may be better able to account for that differential at the higher end of the scores. Those aspects of experiencing God were made apparent in the qualitative responses regarding intimacy with Christ. This suggestion is made so that this already good instrument for the population at large could also be more effective at differentiating within the upper end of the scale for religiously conservative groups.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> In the literature, the ideal goal sought for in any of these instruments is an unbiased tool good for all people from all cultures and worldviews. At the outset, this is an untenable proposition. On the whole Psychology tends to seek a norm that is consistent with, from a biblical worldview, a fallen world, which does not include the full reality of God. It is right to reflect that in this scale, but it neglects those, such as Jesus, who live in a much fuller reality where God is consistently present — this idea, should form the upper end of the scale and it is the one reflected in the passages of Paul cited. Generally speaking, these characteristics of the spiritual life are more often found in the more contemplative oriented literature on the spiritual life (within Christianity). Moreover, it is important to challenge the ability of an instrument to remain unbiased with regard to culture and worldview. If the Christian Scriptures are right, and they seem to be very accurate regarding real reality, then worldview exerts an incredible influence on well-being and spiritual well-being as can be seen across the globe, and wherever Christianity has dominated and influenced the culture, the whole of culture has benefitted. Consequently, it appears that culture/worldview and spirituality cannot be separated. And it appears that while Jesus loves all people of all cultures, He is advocating for a culture that transcends and challenges them all into a life of blessing that cannot be had apart from the living and true God presented in Christian Scriptures and both lived and advocated for by Jesus. That is, living in the full conscious awareness of the living God as reflected in Jesus (Trinity). As

Lastly, the area of *retention* and *perceived ministry effectiveness* need further attention regarding their association with the spiritual life. Since these indices and their questions were researcher designed, there is some doubt that the questions asked really captured what is necessary. There also may be problems with the scale. While a weak influence of the spiritual life indicated, it is difficult to discern whether it is a result of the instrument items, or this researcher's lack of experience, or whether in fact there is no real correlational association that is influential. So these two items beg further study since logically they should at least moderately correlate with spiritual life practices.

### **The Author's Witness to Spiritual Formation and the Experience of God**

As this author has walked through the most recent years in the application of and the exercise of a number of spiritual practices, a change has taken place. Most importantly it is a change in passion and perspective, and it concerns God. While always seen in a favorable light, the goodness of the experience with God in relationship has gone too deep for words and become an intrinsic motivational force that has nothing to constrain it. There is an experience now that cannot be adequately communicated because it concerns a fantastically good God, who in Trinitarian perichoresis, has gone out in love to draw this author into His presence. Yet He does that, not to bless alone, but to propel forward into a world that knows not this experience with Him, even though He has been extending invitations all day long. Yet as Paul was compelled, now to some degree this writer senses that same compelling, not out of duty but of an overwhelming and yet to be understood love that is left unspoken and only experienced. Spiritual Disciplines formed a significant part of the journey, but the more important aspect was the fantastic desire to

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such, the norm for the scale cannot be a-cultural, but may need to move into a more fully orbéd biblical worldview as advocated by and lived in Jesus.

know God through Jesus, which this author now knows as an invitation that He has always been extending, and which never arose from an act of the writer's will. It is this love that fosters the environment for the contagious expansion of the Kingdom. May it never cease but be extended through many others to the glory of our Lord and His Kingdom.

### **Conclusion**

First this project flows out of a deep belief that a relationship with God is to be experienced in every area of life. Secondly, this study and the process fostered not only an academic understanding, but also a real, live, insightful, heartfelt conscious awareness and experience of the living God in Jesus that cannot be put in to words. Now it is apparent that the Apostle Paul was writing his experience, as was Moses, and David. They were not just writing facts, but living lives that were impacted in their experience by the living, loving presence of God. They were aware and responsively living in relationship with God. God wants people, including missionaries, to experience Him in Jesus! And this is a deep, rich experience that is tied to a focus first on wanting to know and walk with Him. It is not about religion, or religious activities. As this study points out, it is about the pursuit of God and the relationship that results in a heart that burns after His with a joy that cannot be contained, and results in an overflow that releases the potential for contagiously expanding the Kingdom. This is God; this is Paul! God is a person to be enjoyed that invites an obedience not of works or effort, but of fantastic love in response to knowing Him. So it has been an intensifying and confirming journey regarding the pursuit of God (John 17:3, Phil 3:8-14).

As this journey concludes, the relationship of spiritual disciplines with spiritual well-being has been validated, indicating there is a real and valid experience of God to be had by meeting Him through them. *Retention* and *Effectiveness*, while not correlated with spiritual life practices at a moderate or greater level, nonetheless are impacted by them, but for the criteria of this study, a relationship of sufficient influence was not validated. Beyond these, there remains missionaries, new and existing, within GEM that need to be led, encouraged and nurtured in their spiritual lives so they can become more deeply enthralled with God in their heart experience and pass on the contagion of Kingdom expansion to others.

## APPENDIX A

### INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear GEM Missionary,

Hi! I am writing invite you to participate in an online survey regarding the spiritual formation practices of Greater Europe Mission personnel and the relationship of these practices to their spiritual well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness, and retention.

GEM's Member Care department is both supportive of this research and interested in its findings. This study may provide insights and be helpful in generating strategies and ideas that can increase the missionary's sense of well-being and effectiveness on the field, as well as strengthen retention. This study is undertaken with you, the missionary, in mind and desires to strengthen the level of care and support that can be provided. Your participation will help greatly in that effort.

This study is being conducted by Doug Mitts. Doug is carrying out this study in conjunction with his Doctor of Ministry studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the area of Spiritual Formation for Ministry Leaders. Please be assured that your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The information you provide will be in summary form along with the responses of other participants in this study. Your responses will be totally anonymous, and thus never linked with your name. By completing the online questionnaire, you have given your consent that you are a voluntary participant in this study.

While we are extending you an invitation to participate in this study, you are not under any obligation to take the survey. Even if you begin the survey, you are under no obligation to complete it. If you choose to participate, please don't put any extraneous information on the survey that could lead anyone to identify the respondent. The data itself will be kept in password protected online storage and will be collected anonymously.

Below is a link to the survey as well as a password to gain access to the questionnaire. Please copy and paste the password in the appropriate field on the first page. The survey will be available on-line for a limited time only. Please complete the questionnaire by December 10, 2011.

Survey Link: <https://edu.surveymoz.com/s3/696200/GEMSF-OCT31>

Password: rGN7s6EK

Thank you for your participation. Your involvement is greatly valued and will potentially benefit GEM and its missionaries. May God bless you and keep you and cause His face to shine upon you!

In His Grace,  
Doug Mitts  
Joined by GEM Member Care

Reply to: [doug.mitts@gemission.org](mailto:doug.mitts@gemission.org)

**APPENDIX B**  
**SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

## **GEM Spiritual Formation Survey**

### **Welcome!**

Welcome! Thank you for your time. The information you provide will be used to discern the impact of spiritual formation practices on well-being, perceived ministry effectiveness and retention. Your participation will be helpful in creating and assessing programs that prepare, support and provide for the development of missionaries throughout their careers. This study is being conducted by Doug Mitts and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with the support of Greater Europe Mission's Member Care Department. Please be assured that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential, collected anonymously, and protected by password. The answers that you give will never be linked with your name. By completing this questionnaire, you have given your consent that you are a voluntary participant in this study.

The questions that follow will appear on 19 screen pages with 2 to 5 questions on each page. The survey has been field tested and should take between 15 to 20 minutes of your time. Please answer each question as honestly and as best you can. Response scales may differ from page to page and that is noted at the top of each page.

### **Well-Being**

In the response scale that follows, the strength of your agreement increases as you move from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

1. I don't find much satisfaction in private prayer with God.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. I don't know who I am, where I came from, or where I'm going.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. I believe that God loves me and cares about me.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. I feel that life is a positive experience.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Well-Being, Continued

In the response scale that follows, the strength of your agreement increases as you move from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

5. I believe that God is impersonal and not interested in my daily situations.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. I feel unsettled about my future.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Well-Being, Continued

In the response scale that follows, the strength of your agreement increases as you move from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

9. I don't get much personal strength and support from my God.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. I believe that God is concerned about my problems

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. I don't enjoy much about life.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Well-Being, Continued

In the response scale that follows, the strength of your agreement increases as you move from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

13. I don't have a personally satisfying relationship with God.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
----------------------	------------------------	----------	-------	---------------------	-------------------



☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

14. I feel good about my future.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Well-Being, Continued

In the response scale that follows, the strength of your agreement increases as you move from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

17. I feel most fulfilled when I'm in close communion with God.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Life doesn't have much meaning.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. My relation with God contributes to my sense of well-being.

Strongly	Moderately			Moderately	Strongly
----------	------------	--	--	------------	----------

Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. I believe there is some real purpose for my life.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Outlook

In the response scale that follows, the strength of your agreement increases as you move from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience. Please note that question 25 has a different response scale.

21. I intend to return to my mission field after my next home ministry assignment.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. I intend to return to my country of origin after my next home ministry assignment.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. I believe the ministry in which I am currently engaged is very effective.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. I am satisfied with my accomplishments in ministry overall.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. In general, people I have influenced in ministry have pursued effective ministries of their own.

		Less than half the time	About half the time	In most cases	In almost all cases
Uncertain	Rarely				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Spiritual Life

For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates your personal experience. Please note that there are differing response scales on this page.

26. I practice a daily quiet time/personal devotion with God.

	Less than once a week	Once a week	2-3 times per week	4-5 times per week	6-7 times per week
Uncertain					
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. How much time on average do you spend reading the Bible in your personal devotions?

0-10 min	10-20 min	20-30 min	30 – 45 min	45-60 min	more than 60 min
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. How much time on average do you spend in prayer during your personal devotions?

0-10 min	10-20 min	20-30 min	30 – 45 min	45-60 min	more than 60 min
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Spiritual Life, Continued

For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates your personal experience. Please note that the scale differs from the previous.

29. How often do you read the Bible?

A few

A few

Rarely	times a month	About once a week	times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. How often do you study the Bible for yourself?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. How often do you study the Bible for ministry preparation?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. How often do you memorize Scripture?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Spiritual Life, Continued

For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates your personal experience.

33. How often do you read the Bible meditatively (interactively with the Spirit of God or to hear from God)?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. How often do you read the Bible reflectively (considering your life's alignment with the Word)?

A few times a	About once	A few times a	About once	More than
---------------	------------	---------------	------------	-----------

Rarely	month	a week	week	a day	once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. How often do you spend time just "feeling" or being in God's presence?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. How often do you ask God to speak and then listen for the answer?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Spiritual Life, Continued

For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates your personal experience.

37. How often do you ask God for guidance in making decisions?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. How often do you practice silence before God?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. How often do you get away from all distraction to be alone with God (solitude)?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. How often do you spend time adoring or worshipping God?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Spiritual Life, Continued

For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates your personal experience.

41. How often do you spend time praying on behalf of others (intercession)?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

42. How often do you spend time praying for what God desires rather than what you desire?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43. How often do you thank God for His blessings?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. How often do you express how much you love God to Him?

Rarely	A few times a month	About once a week	A few times a week	About once a day	More than once a day
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Spiritual Life, Continued

For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates your personal experience.

45. How often do you worship with other believers?

- |                       |                           |                       |                          |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Rarely                | A few<br>times a<br>month | About once<br>a week  | A few<br>times a<br>week | About once<br>a day   | More than<br>once a day |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |

46. How often do you share the gospel with non-believers?

- |                       |                           |                       |                          |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Rarely                | A few<br>times a<br>month | About once<br>a week  | A few<br>times a<br>week | About once<br>a day   | More than<br>once a day |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |

47. How often do you celebrate what God is doing in your life?

- |                       |                           |                       |                          |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Rarely                | A few<br>times a<br>month | About once<br>a week  | A few<br>times a<br>week | About once<br>a day   | More than<br>once a day |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |

48. How often do you journal (write about) God's involvement in your life?

- |                       |                           |                       |                          |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Rarely                | A few<br>times a<br>month | About once<br>a week  | A few<br>times a<br>week | About once<br>a day   | More than<br>once a day |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |

## Spiritual Life, Continued

For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates your personal experience. This response scale differs from the previous.

49. How often do you practice Sabbath as distinctly different from other days?

- |        |                      |                          |                       |                           |                           |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rarely | About once<br>a year | A few<br>times a<br>year | About once<br>a month | A few<br>times a<br>month | Once a<br>week or<br>more |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|

50. How often do you fast for spiritual purposes?

- ☐ Rarely      ☐ About once a year      ☐ A few times a year      ☐ About once a month      ☐ A few times a month      ☐ Once a week or more

51. How often do you practice the Lord's Supper / Communion?

- ☐ Rarely      ☐ About once a year      ☐ A few times a year      ☐ About once a month      ☐ A few times a month      ☐ Once a week or more

52. How often do you take spiritual retreats (a 24 hour period or more spent exclusively with God)?

- ☐ Rarely      ☐ About once a year      ☐ A few times a year      ☐ About once a month      ☐ A few times a month      ☐ Once a week or more

## Spiritual Life, Continued

For the purposes of questions 53 through 56, "regularly" or "regular" means practiced with an appropriate frequency for the spiritual discipline and a normal part of your routine (a habit).

53. I regularly practice the following spiritual disciplines personally. Select all that apply.

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fasting       | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual Friendship | <input type="checkbox"/> Retreat            | <input type="checkbox"/> Scripture Memory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lectio Divina | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading        | <input type="checkbox"/> Worship            | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship    | <input type="checkbox"/> Solitude             | <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection         | <input type="checkbox"/> Silence          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meditation    | <input type="checkbox"/> Celebration          | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving/Stewardship | <input type="checkbox"/> Simplicity       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer        | <input type="checkbox"/> Confession           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sabbath            |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach      | <input type="checkbox"/> Submission           | <input type="checkbox"/> Community          |   |



54. I regularly practice the following spiritual disciplines with others (in community). Select all that apply.

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fasting       | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual Friendship | <input type="checkbox"/> Retreat          | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lectio Divina | <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading        | <input type="checkbox"/> Worship          | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving/Stewardship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship    | <input type="checkbox"/> Submission           | <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sabbath            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meditation    | <input type="checkbox"/> Celebration          | <input type="checkbox"/> Simplicity       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer        | <input type="checkbox"/> Confession           | <input type="checkbox"/> Community        |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach      | <input type="checkbox"/> Silence              | <input type="checkbox"/> Scripture Memory |   |

55. Please list the three most beneficial spiritual disciplines for you that you engage in on a regular basis.

56. Please list three spiritual disciplines that you do not practice at all.

## Spiritual Life, Continued

In the response scale that follows, the strength of your agreement increases as you move from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

57. I have a relationship with someone who helps me grow in my spiritual life.

- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Disagree     | Moderately Disagree   | Disagree              | Agree                 | Moderately Agree      | Strongly Agree        |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

58. I easily recognize the leadership of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

59. I easily obey God's leading in my life.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

60. Maintaining consistent daily intimacy with Christ comes easy for me.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Spiritual Life, Continued

In the response scale that follows, the strength of your agreement increases as you move from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

61. I spend as much time listening to God as I do talking to Him.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

62. I allow other Christians to hold me accountable for spiritual growth.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

63. I intentionally initiate relationships with non-believers so I can share the gospel.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
----------------------	------------------------	----------	-------	---------------------	-------------------

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

64. I sacrificially give of my financial resources for ministry purposes.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Spiritual Life, Continued

In the response scale that follows, the strength of your agreement increases as you move from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For each of the following statements select the choice that best indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement as it describes your personal experience:

65. I regularly give of my finances to further the work of God's Kingdom.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

66. I find it difficult to maintain a regular devotional time with God.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

67. I have never been made aware of spiritual disciplines.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

68. I would like help in maintaining consistent intimacy with Christ.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Spiritual Life, Continued

69. In two or three sentences, what spiritual practices bring you the greatest sense

of intimacy with God?

70. In two or three sentences, what are the greatest hindrances to deepening your intimacy with God?

### **Additional Information**

71. How long have you been on the mission field?

- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| less than 1<br>year   | 1-4 years             | 5-8 years             | 9-12 years            | 13-16<br>years        | more than<br>16 years |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

72. Are you currently in an organizational leadership role with GEM?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

73. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male   ☐ Female

74. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ High school/GED  
☐ Some college  
☐ Associates degree  
☐ Bachelor's degree

- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctorate degree
- ☐ Law degree
- ☐ Medical degree
- ☐ Trade or other technical school degree

75. What is your highest level of formal theological training?

- ☐ Not Applicable
- ☐ Some Bible College
- ☐ One year equivalent in Bible
- ☐ Bible College Degree
- ☐ Some Seminary
- ☐ Seminary Degree
- ☐ Doctorate

76. What is your age group?

- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51-60
- ☐ 61-70

## **Thank You!**

Thank you for taking this survey! Your involvement is greatly valued and will potentially benefit GEM and its missionaries.

## APPENDIX C

### SURVEY RESPONSES



Online Surveys, Data Collection and Integration  
www.SurveyGizmo.com

#### Summary Report - Dec 17, 2011

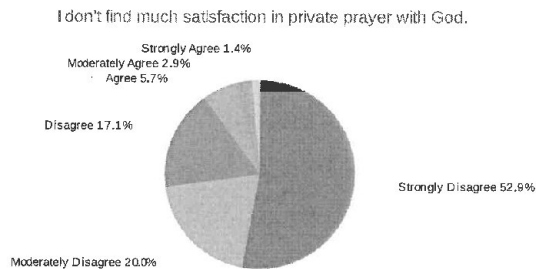
Survey: GEM Spiritual Formation Survey (copy - October 29, 2011)

Enter the Survey Password Below:

Count	Response

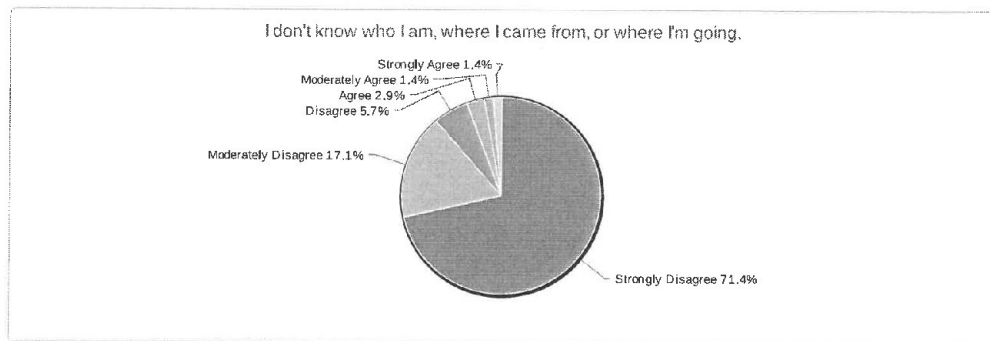
Enter the Survey Password Below:

Count	Response
70	rGN7s6EK



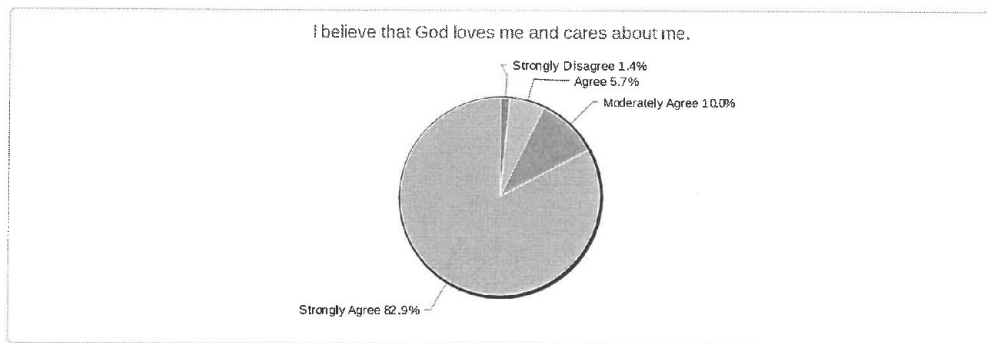
#### 1. I don't find much satisfaction in private prayer with God.

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	37	52.9%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	14	20%	Sum	357.0
Disagree	12	17.1%	Average	5.1
Agree	4	5.7%	StdDev	1.19
Moderately Agree	2	2.9%	Max	6.0
Strongly Agree	1	1.4%		



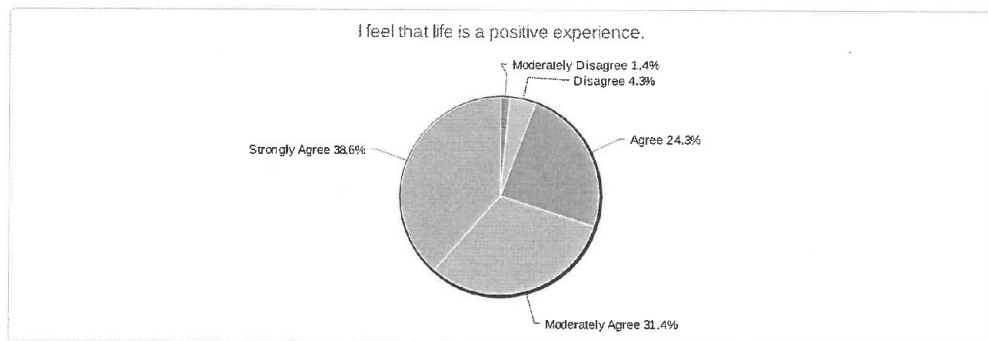
## 2. I don't know who I am, where I came from, or where I'm going.

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	50	71.4%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	12	17.1%	Sum	385.0
Disagree	4	5.7%	Average	5.5
Agree	2	2.9%	StdDev	1.00
Moderately Agree	1	1.4%	Max	6.0
Strongly Agree	1	1.4%		



## 3. I believe that God loves me and cares about me.

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Agree	4	5.7%	Sum	400.0
Moderately Agree	7	10%	Average	5.7
Strongly Agree	58	82.9%	StdDev	0.78
			Max	6.0



**4. I feel that life is a positive experience.**

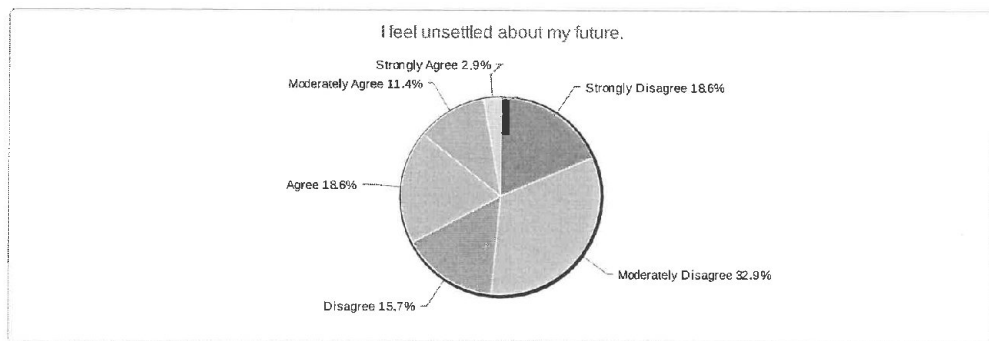
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Moderately Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Disagree	3	4.3%	Sum	351.0
Agree	17	24.3%	Average	5.0
Moderately Agree	22	31.4%	StdDev	0.96
Strongly Agree	27	38.6%	Max	6.0



**5. I believe that God is impersonal and not interested in my daily situations.**

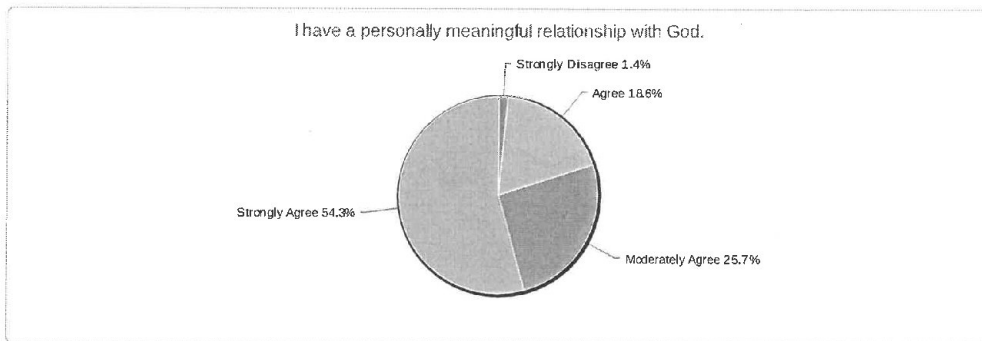
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	62	88.6%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	3	4.3%	Sum	406.0
Disagree	4	5.7%	Average	5.8
Agree	1	1.4%	StdDev	0.60
			Max	6.0





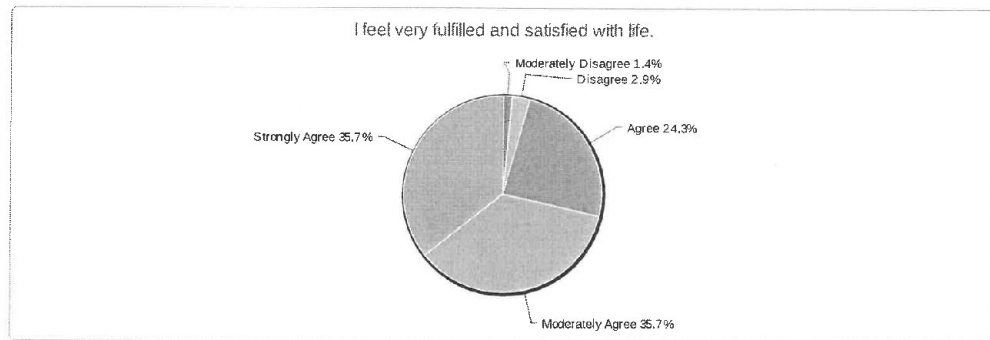
**6. I feel unsettled about my future.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	13	18.6%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	23	32.9%	Sum	294.0
Disagree	11	15.7%	Average	4.2
Agree	13	18.6%	StdDev	1.39
Moderately Agree	8	11.4%	Max	6.0
Strongly Agree	2	2.9%		



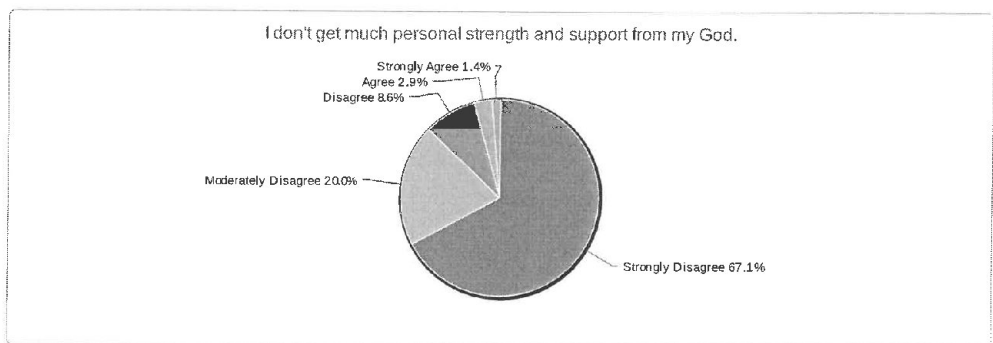
**7. I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Agree	13	18.6%	Sum	371.0
Moderately Agree	18	25.7%	Average	5.3
Strongly Agree	38	54.3%	StdDev	0.93
			Max	6.0



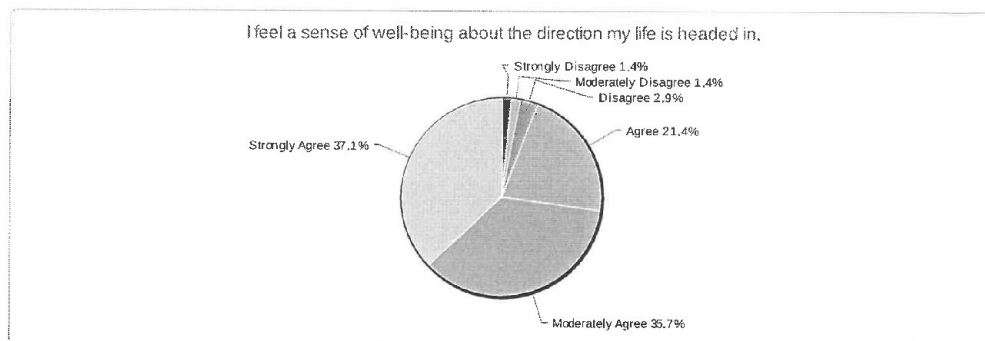
**8. I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Moderately Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Disagree	2	2.9%	Sum	351.0
Agree	17	24.3%	Average	5.0
Moderately Agree	25	35.7%	StdDev	0.92
Strongly Agree	25	35.7%	Max	6.0



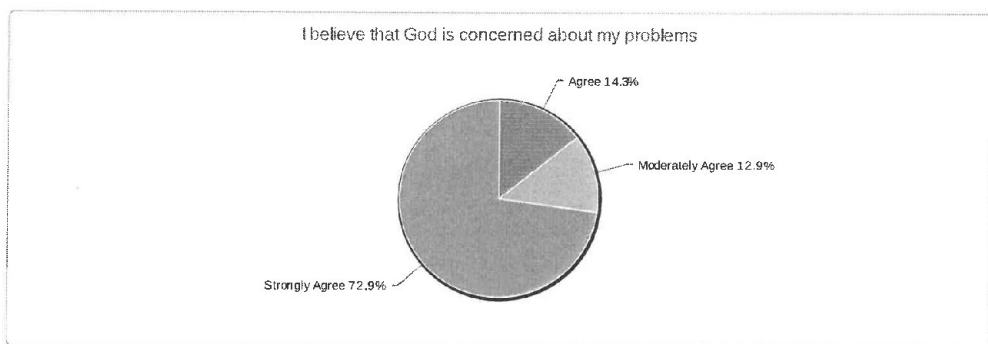
**9. I don't get much personal strength and support from my God.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	47	67.1%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	14	20%	Sum	383.0
Disagree	6	8.6%	Average	5.5
Agree	2	2.9%	StdDev	0.94
Strongly Agree	1	1.4%	Max	6.0



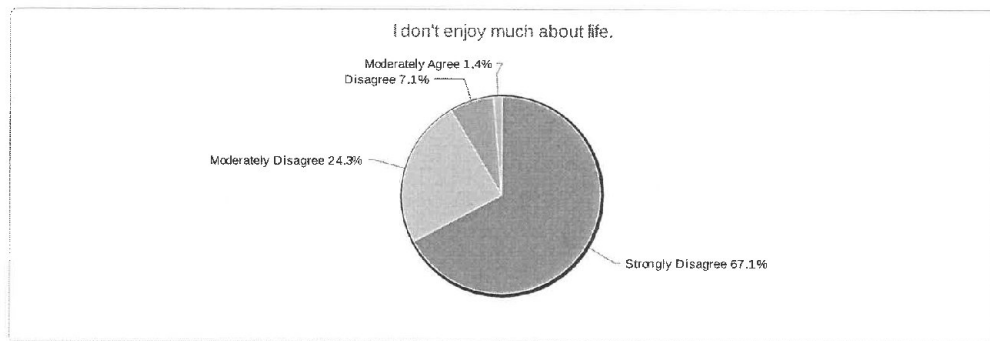
**10. I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	1	1.4%	Sum	350.0
Disagree	2	2.9%	Average	5.0
Agree	15	21.4%	StdDev	1.03
Moderately Agree	25	35.7%	Max	6.0
Strongly Agree	26	37.1%		



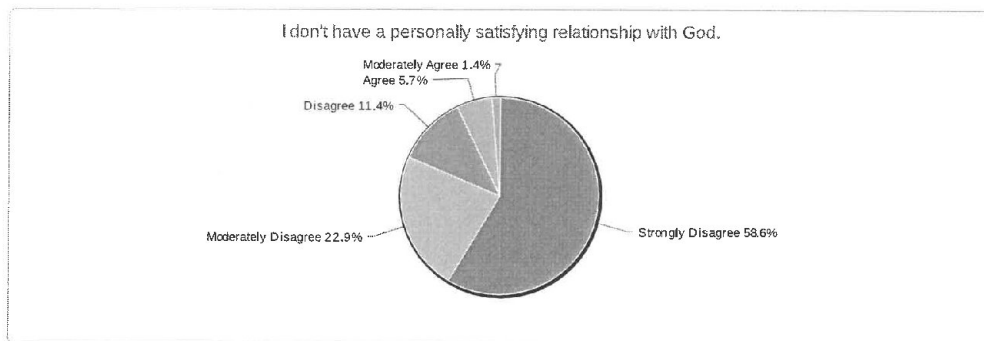
**11. I believe that God is concerned about my problems**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Agree	10	14.3%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Agree	9	12.9%	Sum	391.0
Strongly Agree	51	72.9%	Average	5.6
			StdDev	0.73
			Max	6.0



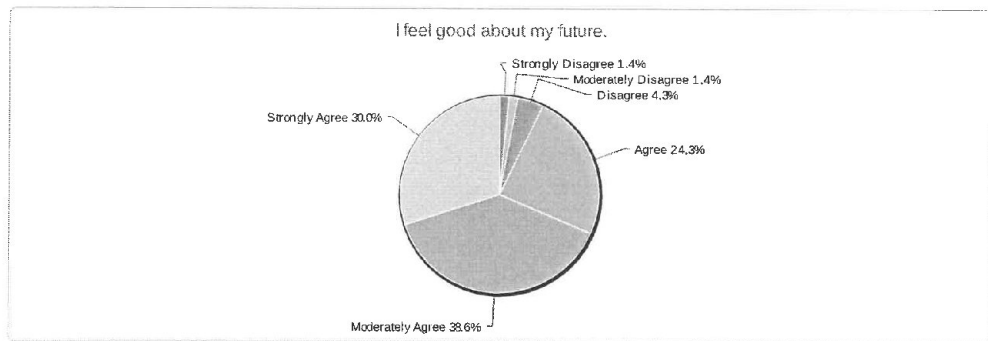
**12. I don't enjoy much about life.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	47	67.1%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	17	24.3%	Sum	389.0
Disagree	5	7.1%	Average	5.6
Moderately Agree	1	1.4%	StdDev	0.75
			Max	6.0



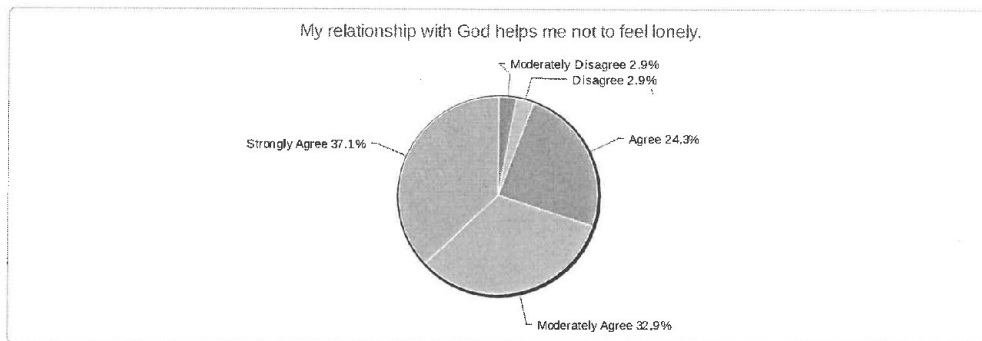
**13. I don't have a personally satisfying relationship with God.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	41	58.6%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	16	22.9%	Sum	372.0
Disagree	8	11.4%	Average	5.3
Agree	4	5.7%	StdDev	0.98
Moderately Agree	1	1.4%	Max	6.0



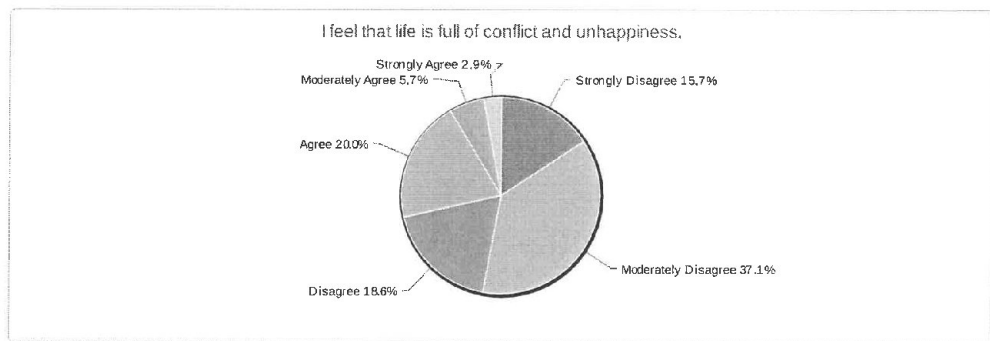
**14. I feel good about my future.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	1	1.4%	Sum	341.0
Disagree	3	4.3%	Average	4.9
Agree	17	24.3%	StdDev	1.03
Moderately Agree	27	38.6%	Max	6.0
Strongly Agree	21	30%		



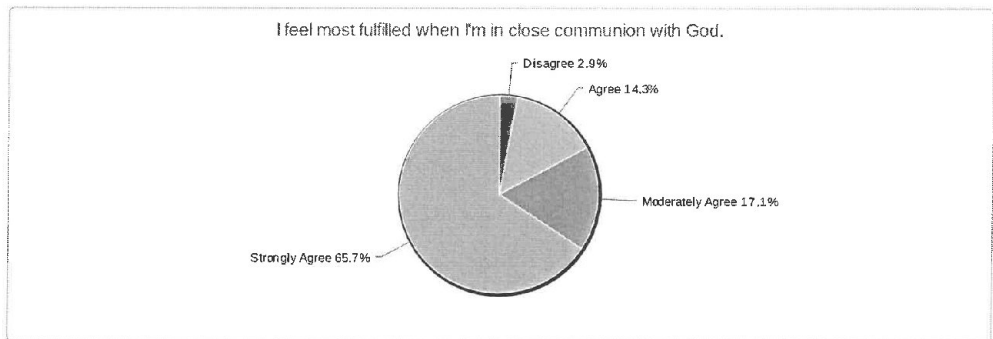
**15. My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Moderately Disagree	2	2.9%	Total Responses	70
Disagree	2	2.9%	Sum	349.0
Agree	17	24.3%	Average	5.0
Moderately Agree	23	32.9%	StdDev	0.99
Strongly Agree	26	37.1%	Max	6.0



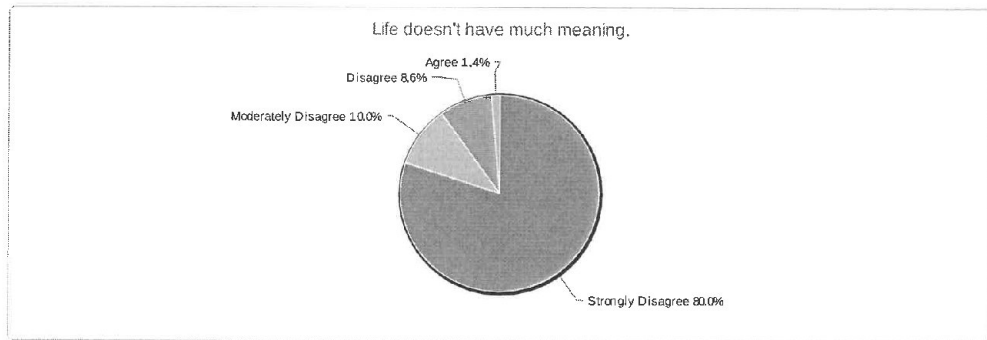
**16. I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	11	15.7%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	26	37.1%	Sum	300.0
Disagree	13	18.6%	Average	4.3
Agree	14	20%	StdDev	1.27
Moderately Agree	4	5.7%	Max	6.0
Strongly Agree	2	2.9%		



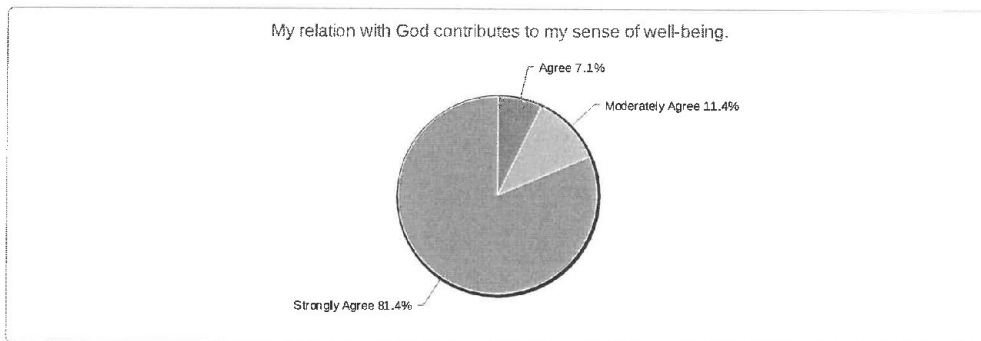
**17. I feel most fulfilled when I'm in close communion with God.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Disagree	2	2.9%	Total Responses	70
Agree	10	14.3%	Sum	382.0
Moderately Agree	12	17.1%	Average	5.5
Strongly Agree	46	65.7%	StdDev	0.84
			Max	6.0



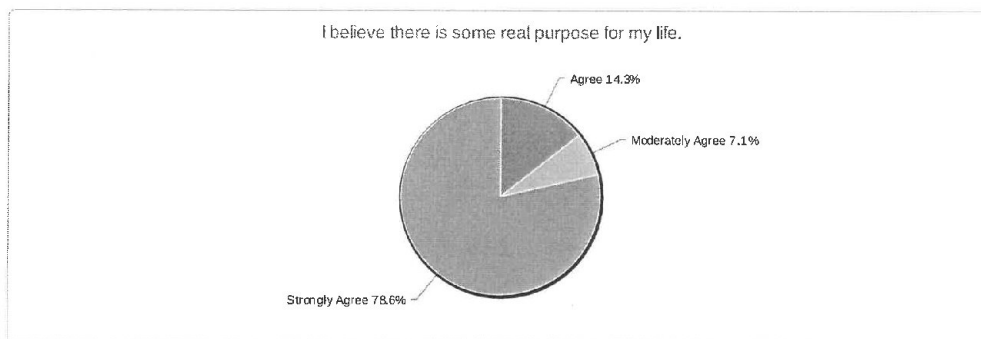
**18. Life doesn't have much meaning.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	56	80%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	7	10%	Sum	398.0
Disagree	6	8.6%	Average	5.7
Agree	1	1.4%	StdDev	0.69
			Max	6.0



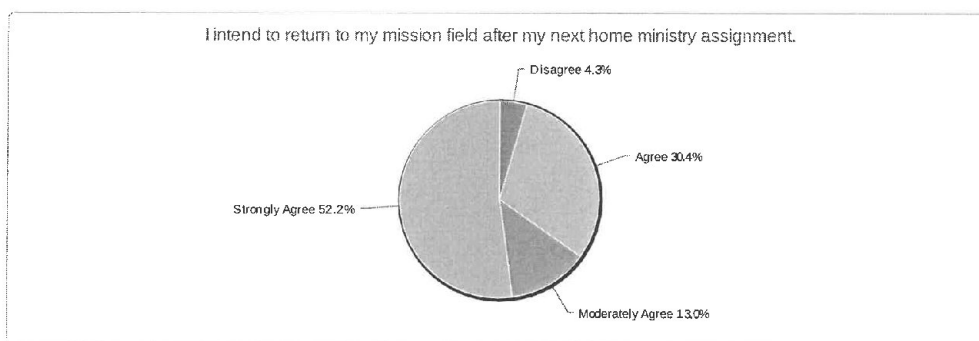
**19. My relation with God contributes to my sense of well-being.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Agree	5	7.1%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Agree	8	11.4%	Sum	402.0
Strongly Agree	57	81.4%	Average	5.7
			StdDev	0.58
			Max	6.0



**20. I believe there is some real purpose for my life.**

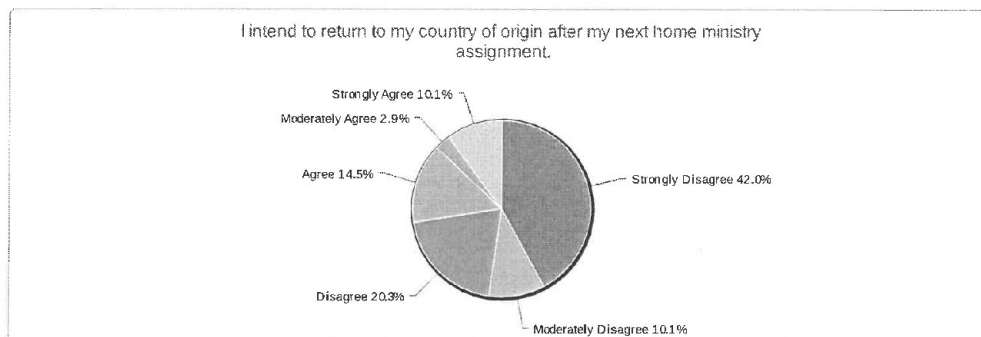
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Agree	10	14.3%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Agree	5	7.1%	Sum	395.0
Strongly Agree	55	78.6%	Average	5.6
			StdDev	0.72
			Max	6.0



**21. I intend to return to my mission field after my next home ministry assignment.**

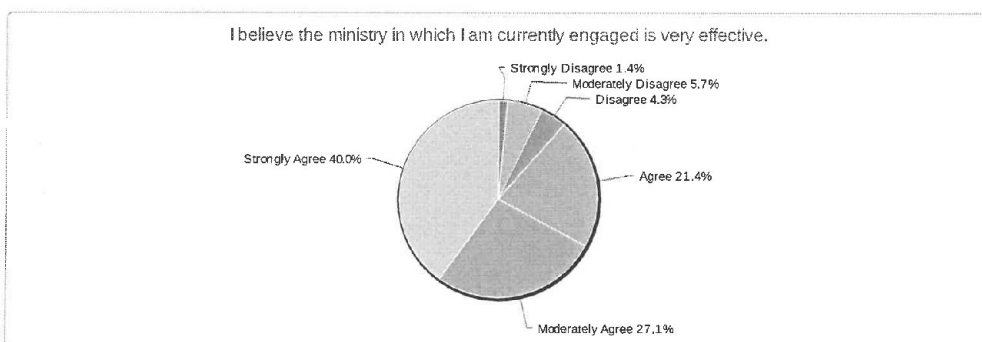
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Disagree	3	4.3%	Total Responses	69
Agree	21	30.4%		
Moderately Agree	9	13%		
Strongly Agree	36	52.2%		





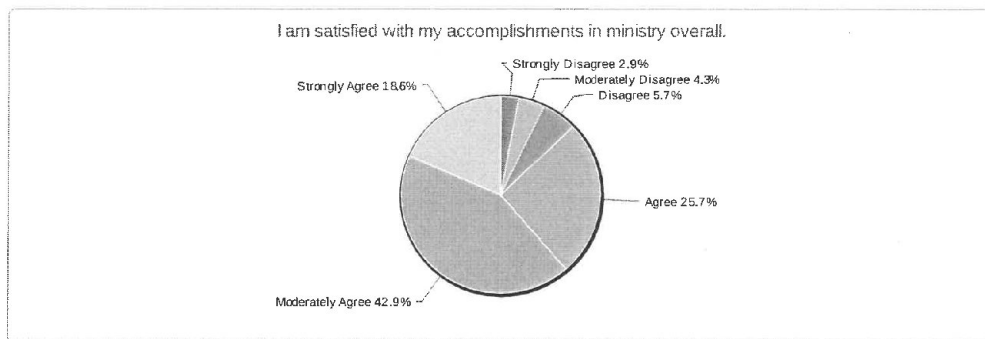
**22. I intend to return to my country of origin after my next home ministry assignment.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	29	42%	Total Responses	69
Moderately Disagree	7	10.1%		
Disagree	14	20.3%		
Agree	10	14.5%		
Moderately Agree	2	2.9%		
Strongly Agree	7	10.1%		



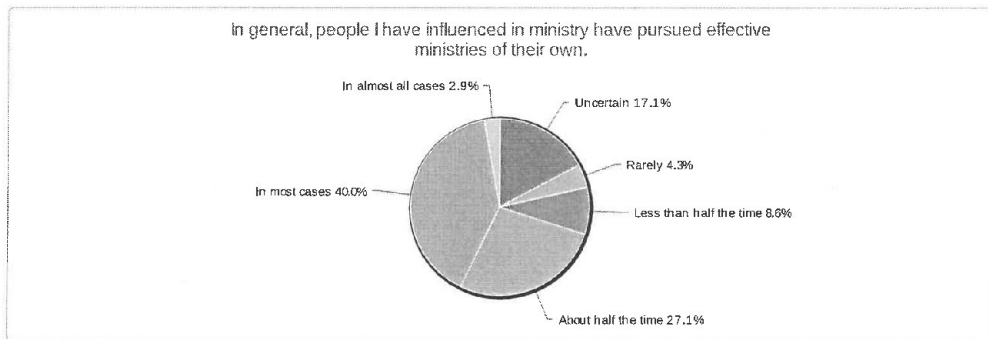
**23. I believe the ministry in which I am currently engaged is very effective.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	4	5.7%		
Disagree	3	4.3%		
Agree	15	21.4%		
Moderately Agree	19	27.1%		
Strongly Agree	28	40%		



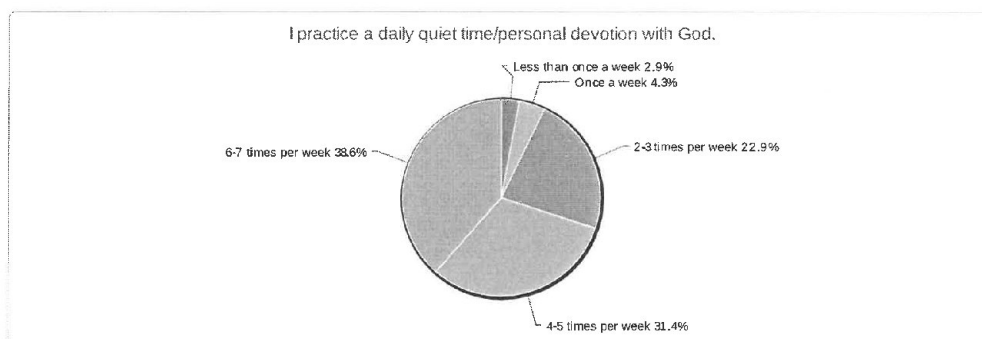
**24. I am satisfied with my accomplishments in ministry overall.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	2	2.9%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	3	4.3%		
Disagree	4	5.7%		
Agree	18	25.7%		
Moderately Agree	30	42.9%		
Strongly Agree	13	18.6%		



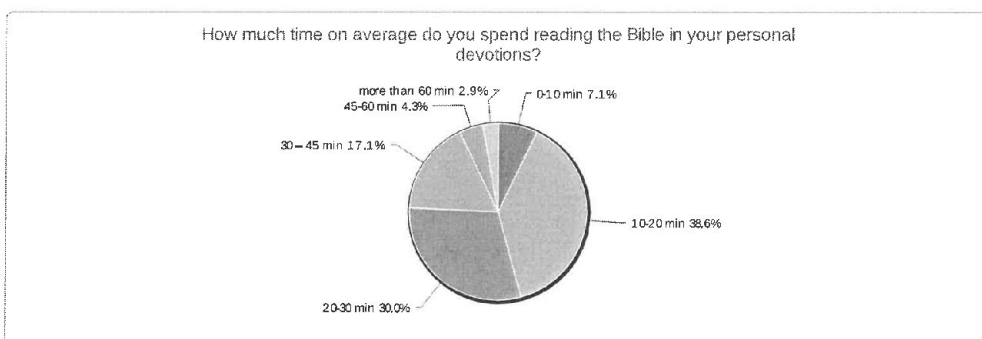
**25. In general, people I have influenced in ministry have pursued effective ministries of their own.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Uncertain	12	17.1%	Total Responses	70
Rarely	3	4.3%		
Less than half the time	6	8.6%		
About half the time	19	27.1%		
In most cases	28	40%		
In almost all cases	2	2.9%		



**26. I practice a daily quiet time/personal devotion with God.**

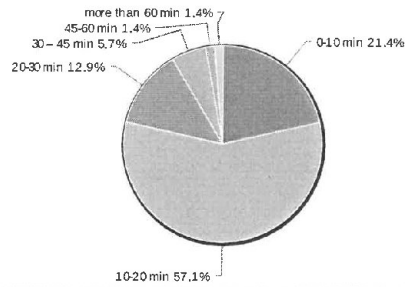
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Less than once a week	2	2.9%	Total Responses	70
Once a week	3	4.3%	Sum	282.0
2-3 times per week	16	22.9%	Average	4.3
4-5 times per week	22	31.4%	StdDev	1.59
6-7 times per week	27	38.6%	Max	6.0



**27. How much time on average do you spend reading the Bible in your personal devotions?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
0-10 min	5	7.1%	Total Responses	70
10-20 min	27	38.6%	Sum	1,185.0
20-30 min	21	30%	Average	18.8
30-45 min	12	17.1%	StdDev	9.50
45-60 min	3	4.3%	Max	45.0
more than 60 min	2	2.9%		

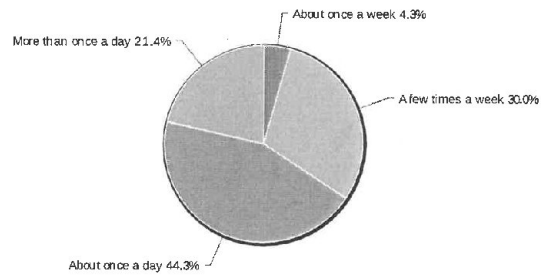
How much time on average do you spend in prayer during your personal devotions?



28. How much time on average do you spend in prayer during your personal devotions?

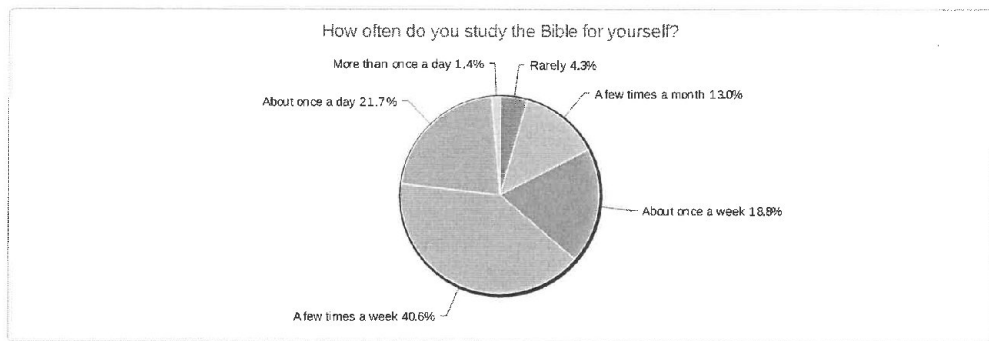
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
0-10 min	15	21.4%	Total Responses	70
10-20 min	40	57.1%	Sum	745.0
20-30 min	9	12.9%	Average	13.8
30-45 min	4	5.7%	StdDev	7.39
45-60 min	1	1.4%	Max	45.0
more than 60 min	1	1.4%		

How often do you read the Bible?



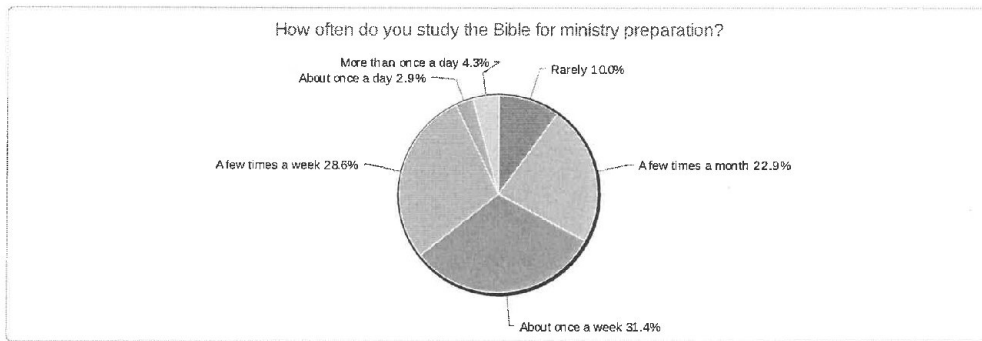
29. How often do you read the Bible?

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
About once a week	3	4.3%	Total Responses	70
A few times a week	21	30%		
About once a day	31	44.3%		
More than once a day	15	21.4%		



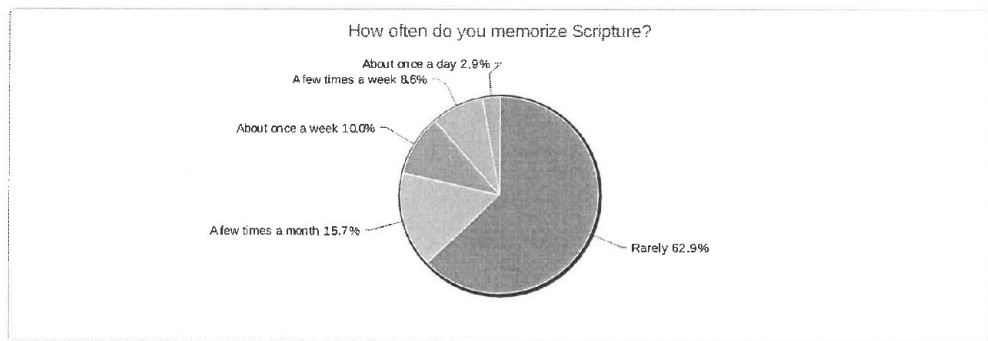
**30. How often do you study the Bible for yourself?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	3	4.3%	Total Responses	69
A few times a month	9	13%		
About once a week	13	18.8%		
A few times a week	28	40.6%		
About once a day	15	21.7%		
More than once a day	1	1.4%		



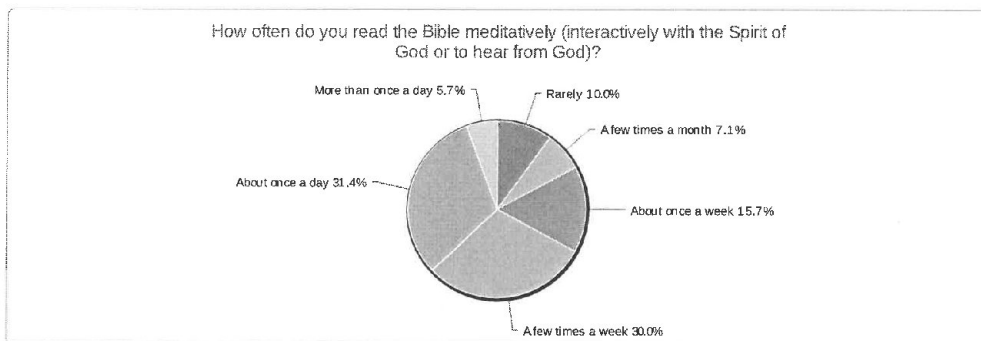
**31. How often do you study the Bible for ministry preparation?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	7	10%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	16	22.9%		
About once a week	22	31.4%		
A few times a week	20	28.6%		
About once a day	2	2.9%		
More than once a day	3	4.3%		



**32. How often do you memorize Scripture?**

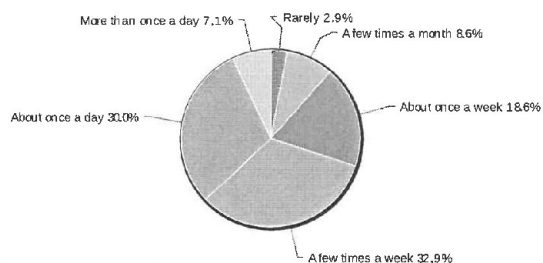
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	44	62.9%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	11	15.7%		
About once a week	7	10%		
A few times a week	6	8.6%		
About once a day	2	2.9%		



**33. How often do you read the Bible meditatively (interactively with the Spirit of God or to hear from God)?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	7	10%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	5	7.1%		
About once a week	11	15.7%		
A few times a week	21	30%		
About once a day	22	31.4%		
More than once a day	4	5.7%		

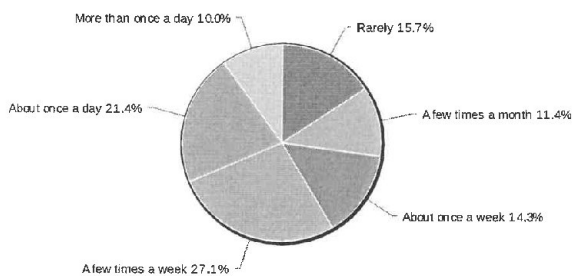
How often do you read the Bible reflectively (considering your life's alignment with the Word)?



**34. How often do you read the Bible reflectively (considering your life's alignment with the Word)?**

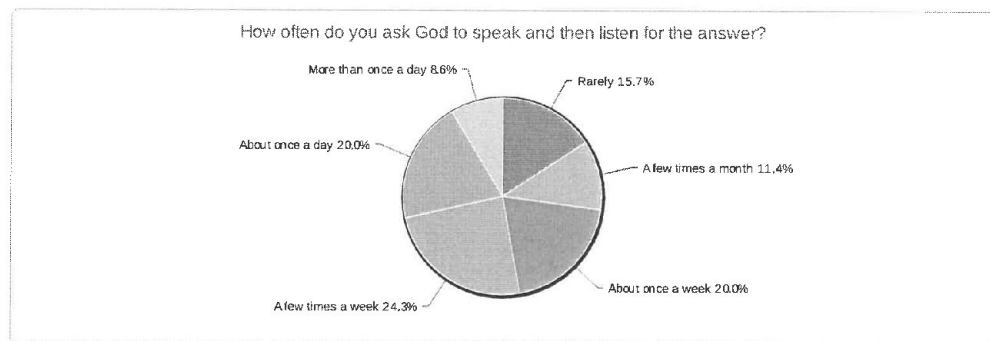
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics
Rarely	2	2.9%	Total Responses 70
A few times a month	6	8.6%	
About once a week	13	18.6%	
A few times a week	23	32.9%	
About once a day	21	30%	
More than once a day	5	7.1%	

How often do you spend time just "feeling" or being in God's presence?



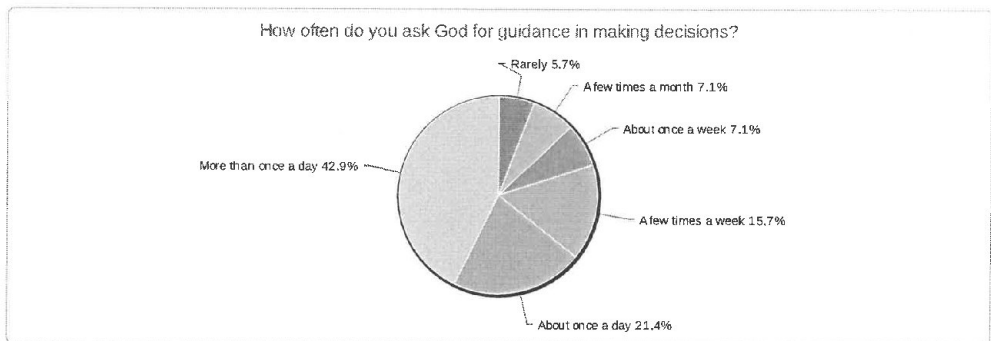
**35. How often do you spend time just "feeling" or being in God's presence?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics
Rarely	11	15.7%	Total Responses 70
A few times a month	8	11.4%	
About once a week	10	14.3%	
A few times a week	19	27.1%	
About once a day	15	21.4%	
More than once a day	7	10%	



**36. How often do you ask God to speak and then listen for the answer?**

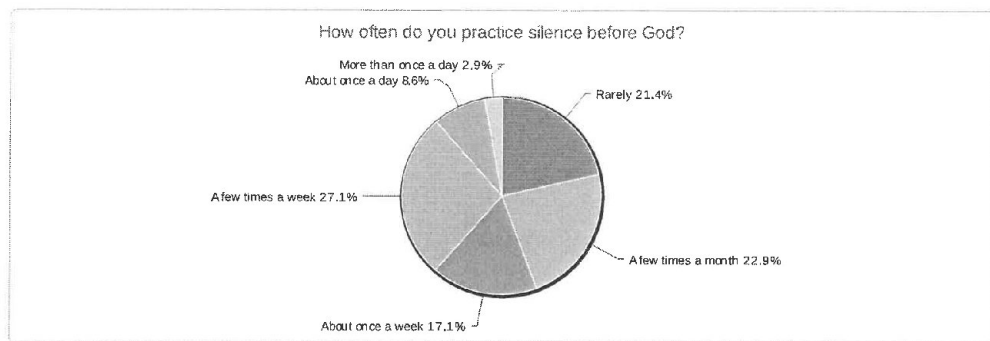
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	11	15.7%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	8	11.4%		
About once a week	14	20%		
A few times a week	17	24.3%		
About once a day	14	20%		
More than once a day	6	8.6%		



**37. How often do you ask God for guidance in making decisions?**

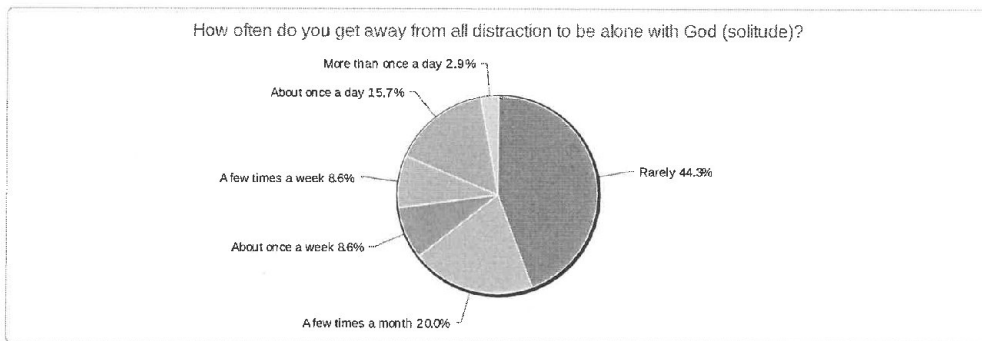
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	4	5.7%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	5	7.1%		
About once a week	5	7.1%		
A few times a week	11	15.7%		
About once a day	15	21.4%		
More than once a day	30	42.9%		





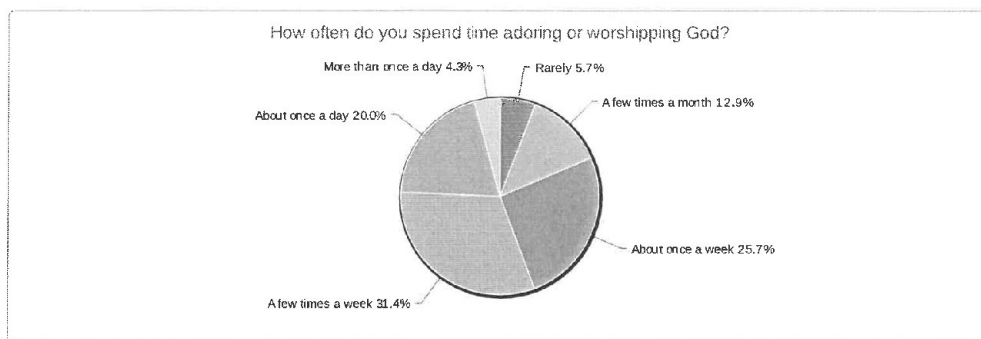
**38. How often do you practice silence before God?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	15	21.4%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	16	22.9%		
About once a week	12	17.1%		
A few times a week	19	27.1%		
About once a day	6	8.6%		
More than once a day	2	2.9%		



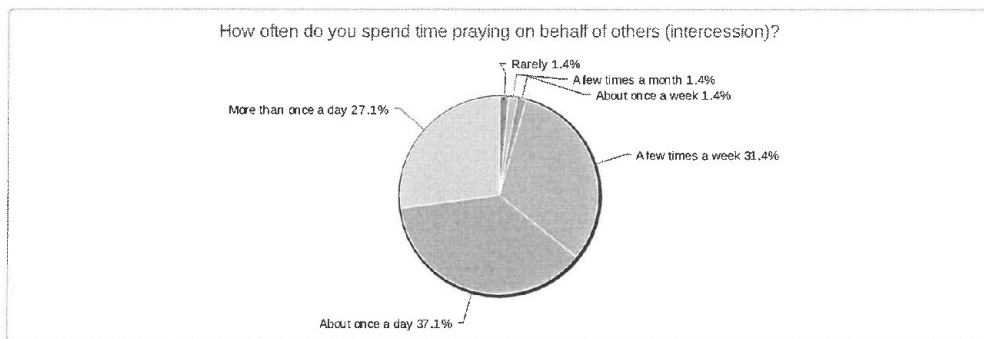
**39. How often do you get away from all distraction to be alone with God (solitude)?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	31	44.3%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	14	20%		
About once a week	6	8.6%		
A few times a week	6	8.6%		
About once a day	11	15.7%		
More than once a day	2	2.9%		



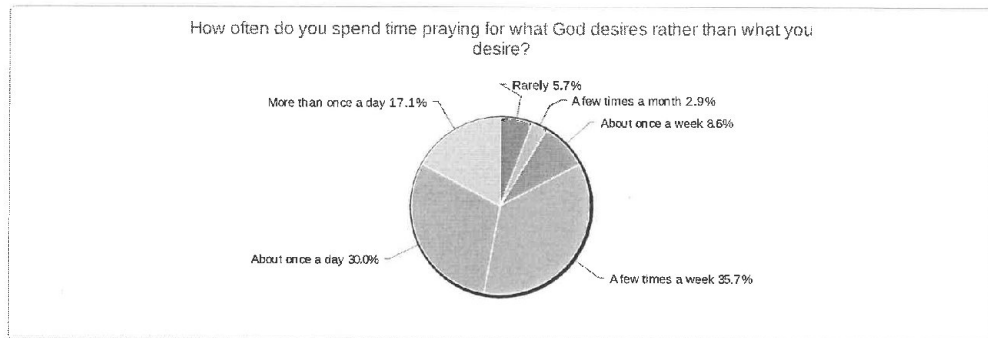
**40. How often do you spend time adoring or worshipping God?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	4	5.7%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	9	12.9%		
About once a week	18	25.7%		
A few times a week	22	31.4%		
About once a day	14	20%		
More than once a day	3	4.3%		



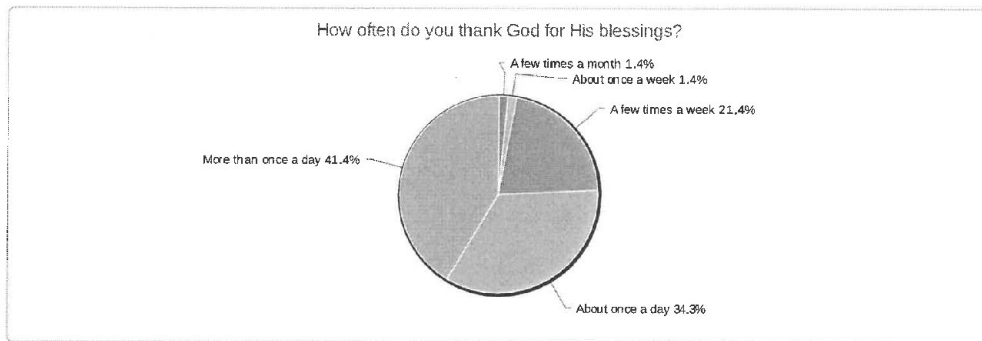
**41. How often do you spend time praying on behalf of others (intercession)?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	1	1.4%		
About once a week	1	1.4%		
A few times a week	22	31.4%		
About once a day	26	37.1%		
More than once a day	19	27.1%		



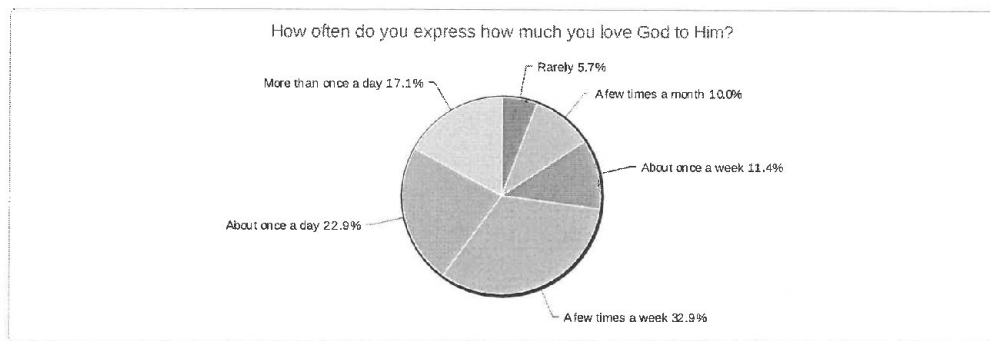
**42. How often do you spend time praying for what God desires rather than what you desire?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	4	5.7%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	2	2.9%		
About once a week	6	8.6%		
A few times a week	25	35.7%		
About once a day	21	30%		
More than once a day	12	17.1%		



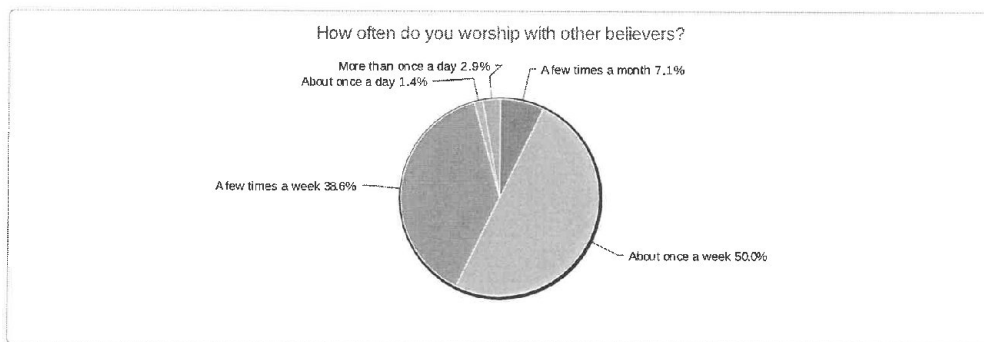
**43. How often do you thank God for His blessings?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
A few times a month	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
About once a week	1	1.4%		
A few times a week	15	21.4%		
About once a day	24	34.3%		
More than once a day	29	41.4%		



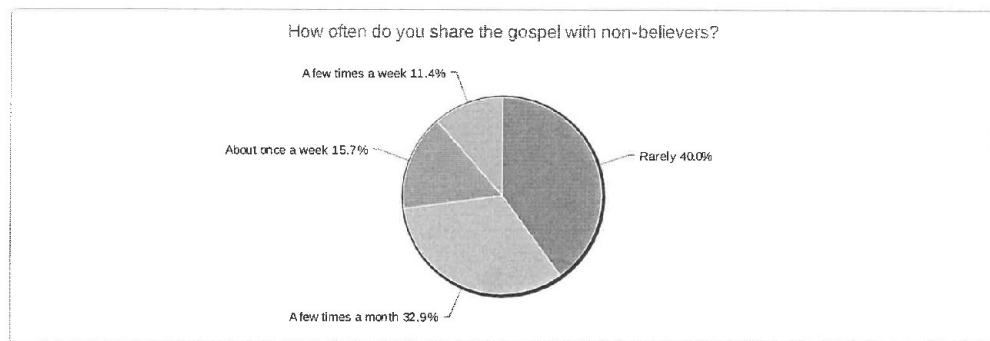
**44. How often do you express how much you love God to Him?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	4	5.7%	Total Responses	70
A few times a month	7	10%		
About once a week	8	11.4%		
A few times a week	23	32.9%		
About once a day	16	22.9%		
More than once a day	12	17.1%		



**45. How often do you worship with other believers?**

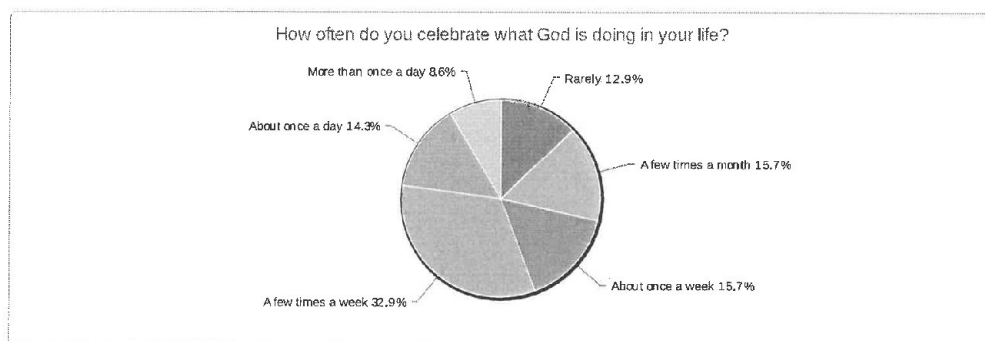
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
A few times a month	5	7.1%	Total Responses	70
About once a week	35	50%		
A few times a week	27	38.6%		
About once a day	1	1.4%		
More than once a day	2	2.9%		



**46. How often do you share the gospel with non-believers?**

Value	Count	Percent %
Rarely	28	40%
A few times a month	23	32.9%
About once a week	11	15.7%
A few times a week	8	11.4%

Statistics	
Total Responses	70

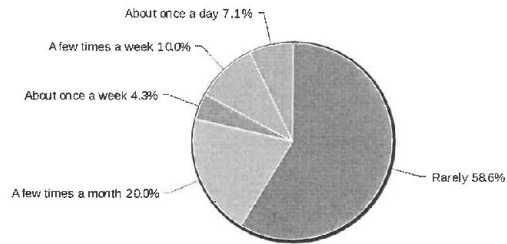


**47. How often do you celebrate what God is doing in your life?**

Value	Count	Percent %
Rarely	9	12.9%
A few times a month	11	15.7%
About once a week	11	15.7%
A few times a week	23	32.9%
About once a day	10	14.3%
More than once a day	6	8.6%

Statistics	
Total Responses	70

How often do you journal (write about) God's involvement in your life?

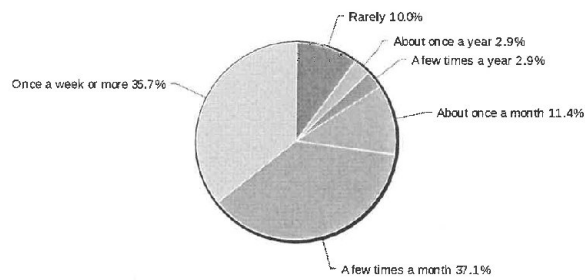


**48. How often do you journal (write about) God's involvement in your life?**

Value	Count	Percent %
Rarely	41	58.6%
A few times a month	14	20%
About once a week	3	4.3%
A few times a week	7	10%
About once a day	5	7.1%

Statistics	
Total Responses	70

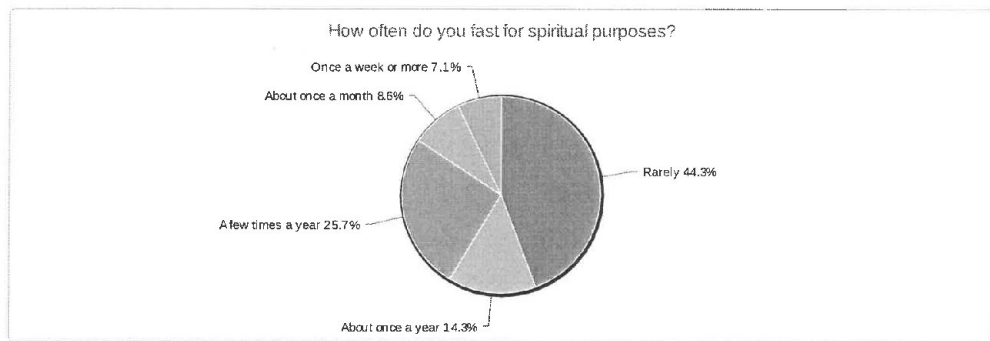
How often do you practice Sabbath as distinctly different from other days?



**49. How often do you practice Sabbath as distinctly different from other days?**

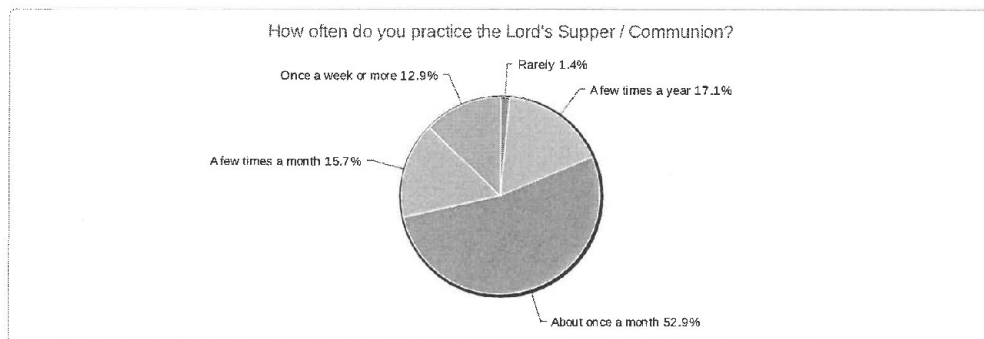
Value	Count	Percent %
Rarely	7	10%
About once a year	2	2.9%
A few times a year	2	2.9%
About once a month	8	11.4%
A few times a month	26	37.1%
Once a week or more	25	35.7%

Statistics	
Total Responses	70



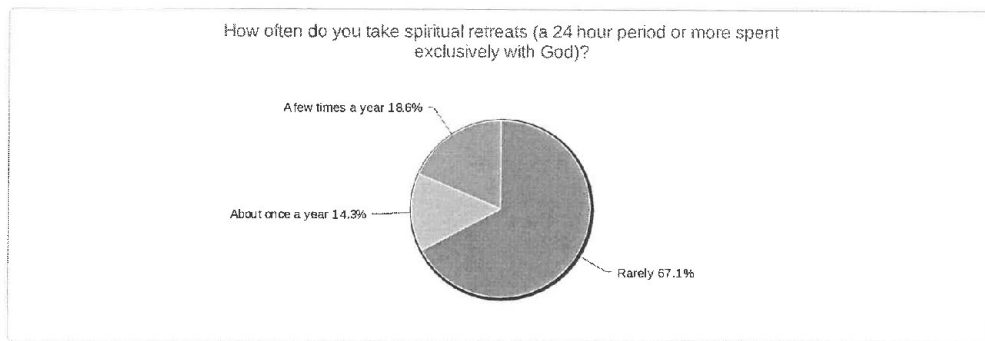
**50. How often do you fast for spiritual purposes?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	31	44.3%	Total Responses	70
About once a year	10	14.3%		
A few times a year	18	25.7%		
About once a month	6	8.6%		
Once a week or more	5	7.1%		



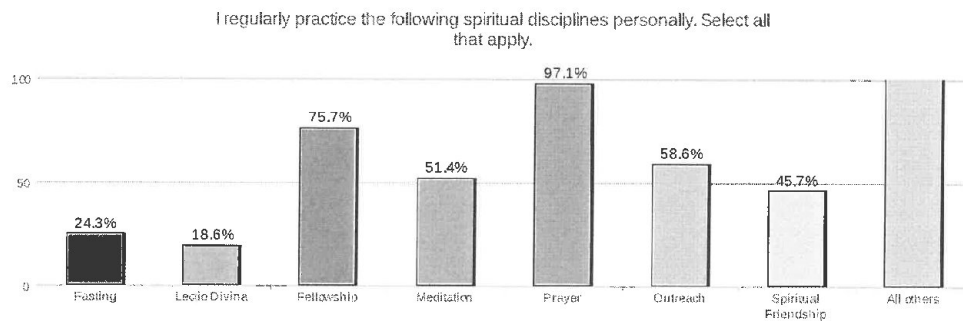
**51. How often do you practice the Lord's Supper / Communion?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Rarely	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
A few times a year	12	17.1%		
About once a month	37	52.9%		
A few times a month	11	15.7%		
Once a week or more	9	12.9%		



**52. How often do you take spiritual retreats (a 24 hour period or more spent exclusively with God)?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics
Rarely	47	67.1%	Total Responses 70
About once a year	10	14.3%	
A few times a year	13	18.6%	



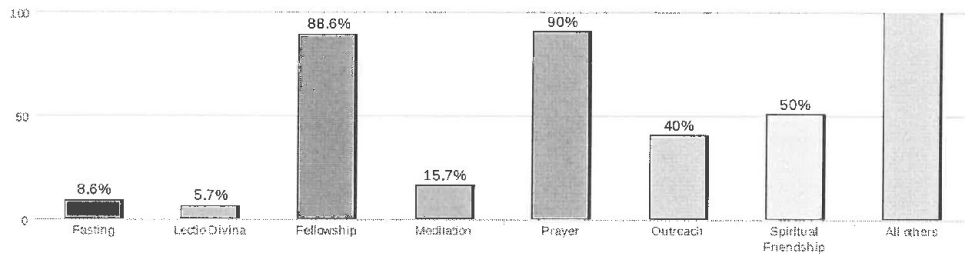
**53. I regularly practice the following spiritual disciplines personally. Select all that apply.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics
Fasting	17	24.3%	Total Responses 70
Lectio Divina	13	18.6%	
Fellowship	53	75.7%	
Meditation	36	51.4%	
Prayer	68	97.1%	
Outreach	41	58.6%	
Spiritual Friendship	32	45.7%	
Bible Reading	64	91.4%	
Solitude	26	37.1%	
Celebration	25	35.7%	
Confession	48	68.6%	
Submission	23	32.9%	
Retreat	10	14.3%	
Worship	58	82.9%	
Reflection	47	67.1%	
Giving/Stewardship	63	90%	
Sabbath	41	58.6%	



Community	43	61.4%
Scripture Memory	17	24.3%
Bible Study	55	78.6%
Silence	23	32.9%
Simplicity	25	35.7%

I regularly practice the following spiritual disciplines with others (in community). Select all that apply.



54. I regularly practice the following spiritual disciplines with others (in community). Select all that apply.

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics
Fasting	6	8.6%	Total Responses 70
Lectio Divina	4	5.7%	
Fellowship	62	88.6%	
Meditation	11	15.7%	
Prayer	63	90%	
Outreach	28	40%	
Spiritual Friendship	35	50%	
Bible Reading	49	70%	
Submission	11	15.7%	
Celebration	37	52.9%	
Confession	19	27.1%	
Silence	4	5.7%	
Retreat	7	10%	
Worship	61	87.1%	
Reflection	20	28.6%	
Simplicity	4	5.7%	
Community	50	71.4%	
Scripture Memory	4	5.7%	
Bible Study	52	75.7%	
Giving/Stewardship	31	44.3%	
Sabbath	23	32.9%	

55. Please list the three most beneficial spiritual disciplines for you that you engage in on a regular basis.

Count	Response
1	1. Prayer 2. Scripture memory 3. Outreach
1	Bible Reading Prayer Submission

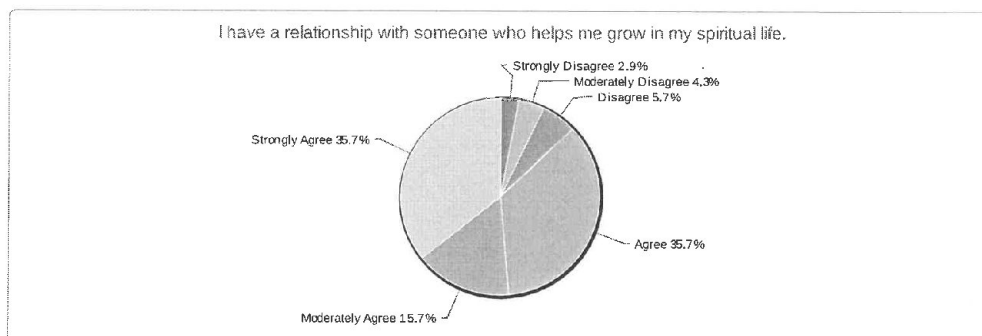
- 1 Bible Reading/Meditation, Prayer in Community, Reflection
- 1 Bible Study Prayer Fellowship (mentoring)
- 1 Bible Study, Prayer, Spiritual Friendship
- 1 Bible Study, Worship and Giving
- 1 Bible Study, praying at all times, sharing spiritual truths in spiritual friendship
- 1 Bible reading Prayer Worship
- 1 Bible reading Prayer & Praise outreach
- 1 Bible reading prayer community
- 1 Bible reading and meditation, prayer, and fasting
- 1 Bible reading, prayer, fellowship
- 1 Bible reading, Prayer, Writing hymn texts based on scripture, Communal worship,
- 1 Bible study prayer worship
- 1 Bible study, fellowship, worship
- 1 Bible study, prayer
- 1 Centering prayer Bible reading and reflection Journaling
- 1 Confession, prayer, Bible reading
- 1 Daily "quiet time" of worship, confession, prayer, regular church attendance,
- 1 Giving Bible Reading Prayer
- 1 Giving, Prayer, outreach
- 1 Giving, Worship/Music, Prayer
- 1 Lectio Divina, Spiritual Friendship, Community
- 1 Lectio Divina, Spiritual Friendship, Submission, Bible Reading
- 1 Memorization, Fellowship & Prayer
- 1 Prayer Bible Reading Silence before the Lord enjoying His presence
- 1 Prayer Bible Study Reflection
- 1 Prayer Bible Study Worship
- 1 Prayer Discipleship Outreach/ Sharing faith
- 1 Prayer Scripture memory meditative Bible reading
- 1 Prayer Worship Fellowship
- 1 Prayer Bible Reading Worshipping
- 1 Prayer, Bible Reading and meditation, Worship
- 1 Prayer, Bible Reading, Fellowship
- 1 Prayer, Bible Study, Meditation
- 1 Prayer, Bible reading, Bible study
- 1 Prayer, Bible reading, worship
- 1 Prayer, outreach, celebration
- 1 Quiet Time, Scripture Memory, Prayer
- 1 Reading Scripture & Devotional books, Prayer, Spiritual Friendship
- 1 Scripture Memory Retreat Bible Reading
- 1 Scripture Reading, Prayer Fasting Evangelism
- 1 Scripture memory, worship, sacraments
- 1 Scripture reading Silence Solitude
- 1 Silence, scripture memory, bible reading
- 1 Solitude, Journaling, Bible reading
- 1 Study of Christian Scripture, Worship through song, and Community
- 1 Worship, Fasting and Prayer, Reading the word quietly with God.
- 1 Worship, Fellowship, Sabbath
- 1 Worship, Lectio Divina, confession
- 1 Worship, bible study, constant prayer and talking to God
- 1 a heart of thankfulness worship in the body meditation on scripture
- 1 accountability group, Bible reading, solitude

- 1 bible reading/study prayer reflection
- 1 dependence upon God; daily devotions; prayer
- 1 meditation (contemplative prayer) bible reading fellowship
- 1 prayer, bible reading, fellowship
- 1 prayer, bible reading, outreach
- 1 prayer, biblestudy, worship
- 1 prayer, worship, community
- 1 scripture meditations, journaling, monastic prayer rhythms
- 1 worship prayer fellowship
- 1 I regularly use McCheyne's Bible Study calendar, where I read through the OT once a year & the NT & Psalms twice a year. This has been my practice for the past 15 years, and it has given me incredible blessings. I've noticed in the past months that God will bring to mind specific verses several days before I come across them in my Bible study.. not sure what exactly that means, but it is exciting to read the verses a day or two after they help me in something in life! I've also been learning to pray & to give generously.
- 1 I don't do it, but silence/meditation/prayer are good when I find the time - but I rarely - maybe once or twice a year have time to do it.
- 1 1. Long times of prayer by myself with God 2. Reading long portions of scripture or entire books at one time 3. Worshiping God by myself through songs
- 1 Reading Scripture reflectively and interactively (expecting the HS to speak to me), Confession of sin, Meditation / Reflection
- 1 1 Rewriting scripture to be personalized (using I/we and putting in words to describe me/us or our situation) 2 praying scripture 3 a sm. fellowship with high accountability
- 1 (1 Regular contemplation of who God is, and what he has done for me in the Gospel, has recently been the key to producing worship of him; prayer for his concerns, prayer for others, writing songs, personal evangelism, the desire for accountability without fear of judgement. (2) Bible study, (3) Bible reading
- 1 regular, scheduled time reading the Bible prayer, including thanksgiving, intercession, etc., corporate worship, through singing

56. Please list three spiritual disciplines that you do not practice at all.

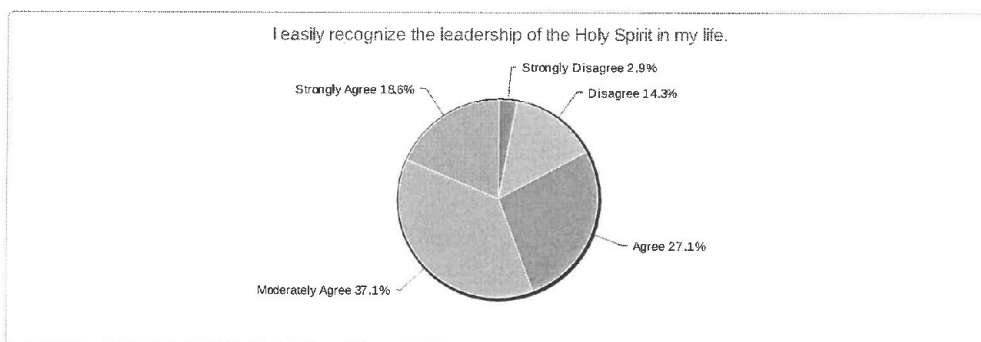
Count	Response
1	1. Scripture Memory 2. Personal Retreats 3. Meditation
1	Confession
1	Confession Spiritual Friendship Fasting
1	Fasting Confession Scripture memory
1	Fasting Scripture Memory Lectio Divina - not sure what it is
1	Fasting Silence Solitude
1	Fasting (rarely)
1	Fasting, Celebration, Retreat
1	Fasting, Scripture Memory (at least not intentionally), & confession.
1	Fasting, Scripture Memory, Retreat
1	Fasting, Silence, Lectio Divina
1	Fasting, Simplicity, Scripture Memory
1	Fasting, retreat, submission
1	Fasting, silence and simplicity
1	Fasting, Silence, Scripture memorization
1	Journaling, Reflection, Scripture Memory
2	Lectio Divina
1	Lectio Divina Silence Scripture memory
1	Lectio Divina Simplicity
1	Lectio Divina Solitude

- 1 Lectio Divina Submission Celebration
- 1 Lectio Divina Submission Simplicity
- 1 Lectio Divina, Fasting (extremely rare), Celebration (rare, I guess)
- 1 Lectio Divina, Fasting, Submission
- 1 Lectio Divina, Solitude,
- 1 Lectio Divina, Spiritual friendship??? (no idea what that is), Silence
- 1 Lectio Divina, simplicity, and Scripture memory
- 1 Lectio Divina Scripture memory ?
- 1 Lectio divina meditation reflection
- 1 Or NOT often: Spiritual retreat alone with God Scripture memory
- 1 Practice most all disciplines at different times for variety
- 1 Retreat (more than half day), scripture memory, celebration
- 1 Retreat, Lectio Divina (don't know what it is :))
- 1 Sabbath, retreat,
- 1 Scripture Memory, Fasting,
- 1 Scripture memory, retreats, lectio Divina
- 1 Seldom take opportunity for retreat. Scripture memory, I do not know what lectio divina is,
- 1 Silence Submission Scripture memory
- 1 Silence, scripture memory, submission
- 1 Simplicity Meditation
- 1 Simplicity, Lectio Divina (not sure what this is), Scripture Memory
- 1 Simplicity, fasting, scripture memory
- 1 current family situation makes pure solitude difficult fasting
- 1 fasting retreat
- 1 fasting silence Scripture memory
- 1 fasting silence meditation
- 1 fasting silence simplicity
- 1 fasting, lectio divina, retreat
- 1 fasting, lectio divina, scripture memory
- 1 fasting, lectio divina?? submission??
- 1 fasting, self-flagellation
- 1 fasting, "Lectio Divina"???, meditation
- 1 fasting; scripture memorization; spiritual retreats
- 1 lectio divina
- 1 lectio divina, fasting, outreach
- 1 retreat, fasting,
- 1 silence, and I have no idea what you mean by "spiritual friendship"
- 1 silence, sabbath, retreat
- 1 simplicity lectio divina
- 1 simplicity, silence, spiritual friendship (no idea what this means or entails)
- 1 spiritual friendship/guidance
- 1 spiritual retreat yoga worshipping icons
- 1 I am terrible at journaling and have not settled into a true Sabbath routine since we got here in Italy.
- 1 retreat. (sorry, not sure what is meant by "spiritual friendship"). Lectio Divina? (Not sure how this is defined; I do read prayers, hymns and sermons of great theologians throughout Church history).
- 1 I need to memorize Scripture more and spend more time in spiritual retreat, but I am not aware of a spiritual discipline that I do not practice at all
- 1 don't know what Lectio Divina means! nor do I understand "simplicity" as a discipline weak in scripture memory (but not reading)
- 1 Lectio Divina- I don't even know what that is Retreat Study- I am not teaching right now so I mainly read
- 1 Lectio Divina, Outreach, confession, celebration, submission, spiritual friendship reflection, simplicity, community, scripture memory, giving, and sabbath



**57. I have a relationship with someone who helps me grow in my spiritual life.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	2	2.9%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	3	4.3%		
Disagree	4	5.7%		
Agree	25	35.7%		
Moderately Agree	11	15.7%		
Strongly Agree	25	35.7%		



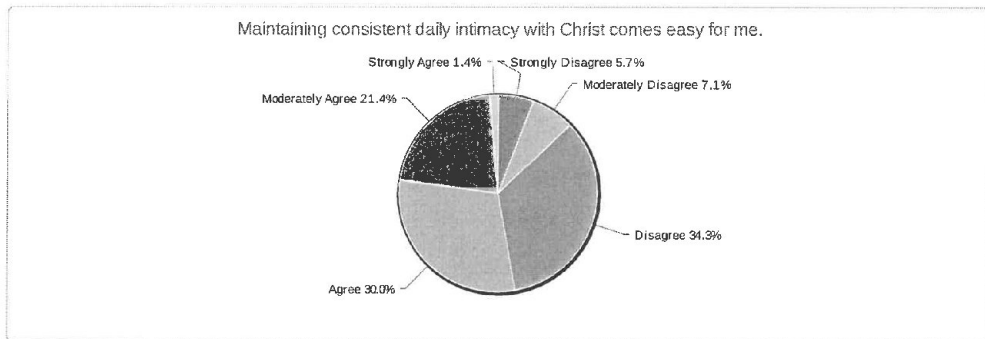
**58. I easily recognize the leadership of the Holy Spirit in my life.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	2	2.9%	Total Responses	70
Disagree	10	14.3%		
Agree	19	27.1%		
Moderately Agree	26	37.1%		
Strongly Agree	13	18.6%		



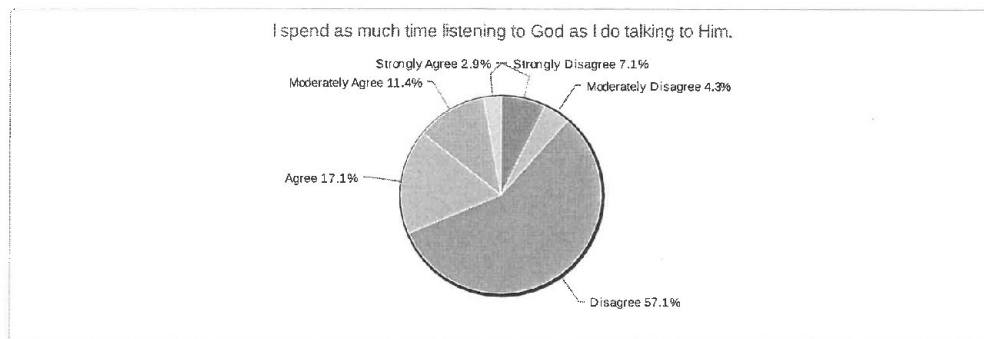
**59. I easily obey God's leading in my life.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	2	2.9%		
Disagree	11	15.7%		
Agree	29	41.4%		
Moderately Agree	19	27.1%		
Strongly Agree	8	11.4%		



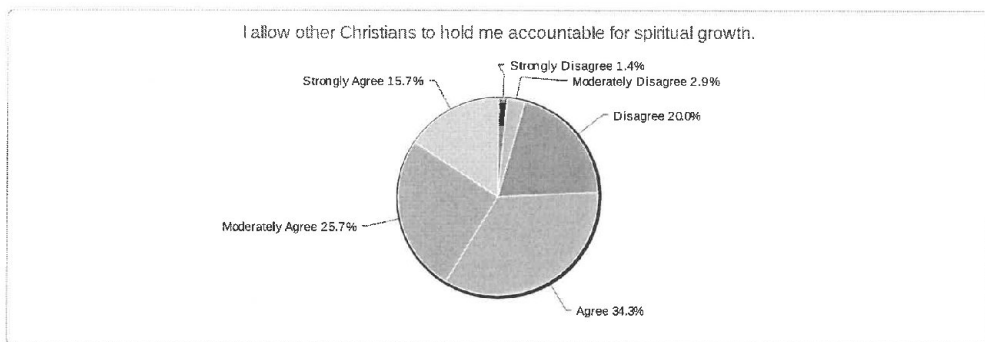
**60. Maintaining consistent daily intimacy with Christ comes easy for me.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	5	7.1%		
Disagree	24	34.3%		
Agree	21	30%		
Moderately Agree	15	21.4%		
Strongly Agree	1	1.4%		



**61. I spend as much time listening to God as I do talking to Him.**

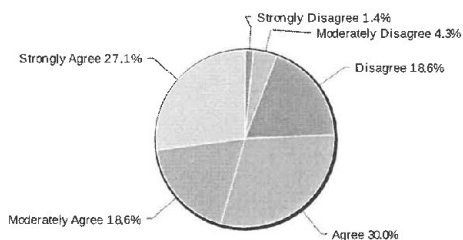
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	5	7.1%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	3	4.3%		
Disagree	40	57.1%		
Agree	12	17.1%		
Moderately Agree	8	11.4%		
Strongly Agree	2	2.9%		



**62. I allow other Christians to hold me accountable for spiritual growth.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	2	2.9%		
Disagree	14	20%		
Agree	24	34.3%		
Moderately Agree	18	25.7%		
Strongly Agree	11	15.7%		

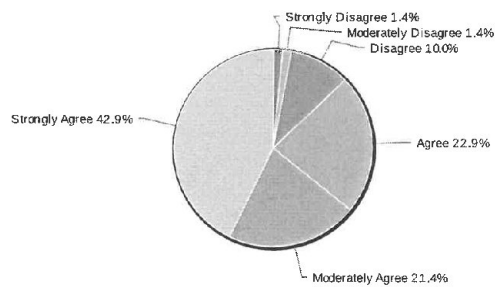
I intentionally initiate relationships with non-believers so I can share the gospel.



**63. I intentionally initiate relationships with non-believers so I can share the gospel.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	3	4.3%		
Disagree	13	18.6%		
Agree	21	30%		
Moderately Agree	13	18.6%		
Strongly Agree	19	27.1%		

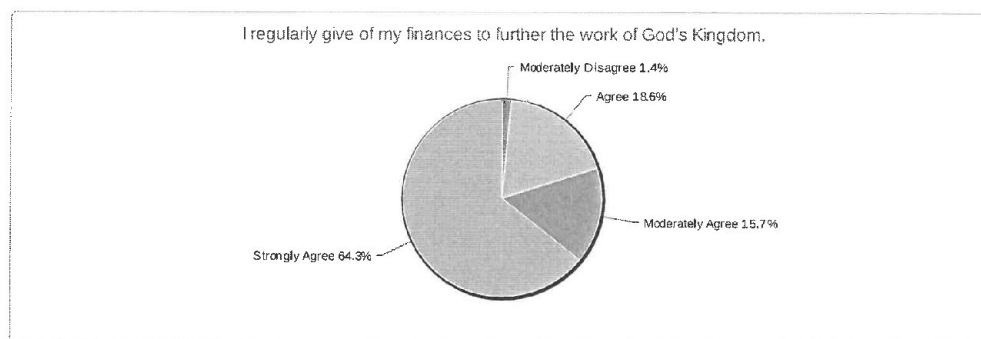
I sacrificially give of my financial resources for ministry purposes.



**64. I sacrificially give of my financial resources for ministry purposes.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	1	1.4%		
Disagree	7	10%		
Agree	16	22.9%		
Moderately Agree	15	21.4%		
Strongly Agree	30	42.9%		





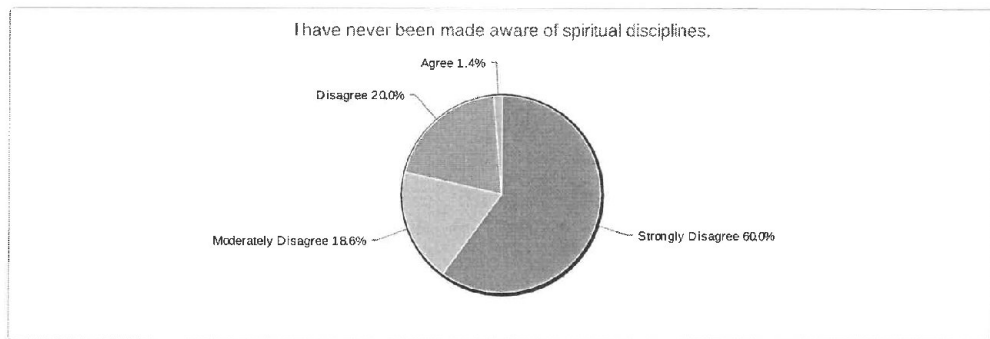
**65. I regularly give of my finances to further the work of God's Kingdom.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Moderately Disagree	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Agree	13	18.6%		
Moderately Agree	11	15.7%		
Strongly Agree	45	64.3%		



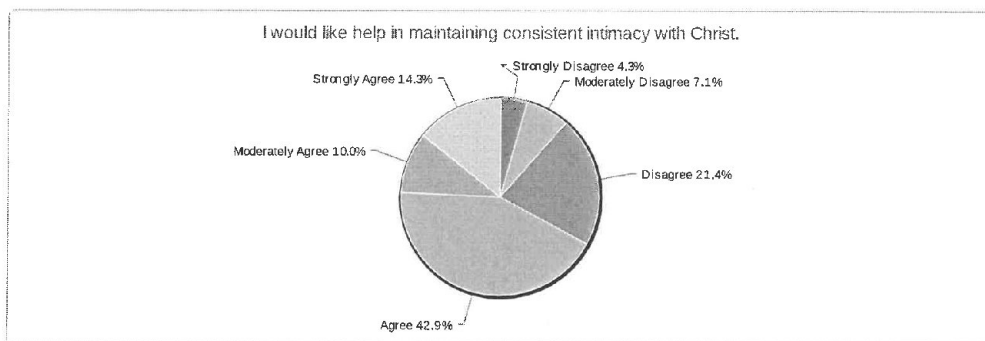
**66. I find it difficult to maintain a regular devotional time with God.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	8	11.4%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	10	14.3%		
Disagree	24	34.3%		
Agree	21	30%		
Moderately Agree	3	4.3%		
Strongly Agree	4	5.7%		



**67. I have never been made aware of spiritual disciplines.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	42	60%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	13	18.6%		
Disagree	14	20%		
Agree	1	1.4%		



**68. I would like help in maintaining consistent intimacy with Christ.**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Strongly Disagree	3	4.3%	Total Responses	70
Moderately Disagree	5	7.1%		
Disagree	15	21.4%		
Agree	30	42.9%		
Moderately Agree	7	10%		
Strongly Agree	10	14.3%		

**69. In two or three sentences, what spiritual practices bring you the greatest sense of intimacy with God?**

Count	Response
1	Being in the Word daily and praying at all times
1	Being still and knowing that He is God.
1	Believing what he says in his word. Hearing his word preached.
1	Bible reading prayer community
1	Bible reading reading commentaries walking and talking w/ God

- 1 Bible reading and prayer
- 1 Bible reading, prayer, fellowship.
- 1 Daily time with God.
- 1 I find that prayer, reading His Word, and meditating on it bring the most intimacy with God.
- 1 Meditating and reflecting on God's Word, and praying Scripture.
- 1 Meditatively reading the Word of God and praying over what I read
- 1 Prayer and stillness and listening.
- 1 Prayer and the Bible
- 1 Prayer, retreat, Bible study
- 1 Quiet time in the word with prayer, fasting and sometimes community worship.
- 1 Reading Scripture Reading books about God Journaling
- 1 Reading of His word is the most important for me.
- 1 Retreat Prayer Fasting
- 1 Simply "spending time in God's backyard" as a mentor once told me. Being still and listening.
- 1 Singing, prayer, reflection, Bible reading, other spiritual reading.
- 1 Stillness, fellowship and prayer.
- 1 The practice of silence and solitude.
- 1 Time in solitude and reflection, prayer, and reading the Bible.
- 1 Worship is where I feel closest. Also, reading and meditating on His word.
- 1 prayer and worship give me the greatest sense of intimacy with god
- 1 prayer; observing God's blessing upon others
- 1 regular reflective journaling; meditation on selected verses
- 1 serving and making ministry awareness to others to forward the gospel
- 1 sitting in silence with Him; contemplative prayer.
- 1 solitude and extended time spent with God in a natural (outdoor) setting, corporate worship
- 1 solitude, journaling.
- 1 Intimacy with God? Where can I go but to Him? I find that a combination of 1. regularly reading the Bible, 2. Sitting for a few moments at times during the day in Lectio Divina: that time is not set, but fluid ie: moments before rising, in prayer chair, before meetings, after meetings, in my car, etc. and 3. honest prayer: speaking and listening, confessing, submitting throughout the days are my life-line. I find that I crave consistency - that exact time that is spent in the word, a set schedule - but in reality, fluidity is what I live with Him. Being open to where and when He leads - so these 3 things are fluidly constant daily gathered moments.
- 1 Reading Scripture reflectively, with meditation, and listening for God to speak. Asking and beseeching the Lord of the Harvest to send labourers into the Harvest and intentionally seeking to be part of that Harvest force. Also praying the Lord's Prayer for the rule of the King over everything and looking and expecting Him to bring that rule into the lives and contexts around me!!
- 1 I enjoy mediating on scripture and find that I consistently am encouraged by the Lord in this practice. I often sense His presence and that He is showing me something about Himself. Of course, prayer plays a role in that as well, as meditation includes responding to God not just listening.
- 1 When I am teaching the Word and people understand it. When I am reading the Word and I know God is speaking to me and I obey. Doing a Bible study with others and sharing my faith.
- 1 Study of Christian Scripture consistently brings me the greatest sense of intimacy with God. I have found that pairing the practice of related disciplines together simultaneously is also profitable. For example, study, reflection, prayer, and solitude.
- 1 Prayer and Bible Study are essential and regular disciplines for meeting God. Fellowship and Corporate Worship too.
- 1 (1) Contemplation of the attributes of God, his works, especially what he has done for me in the Gospel; (2) writing songs that reflect this, (3) Bible study.
- 1 Sitting on my couch and just sharing my heart with God. Also, I often sense a the Holy Spirit's presence when I am sharing the Gospel with people.
- 1 Sharing the gospel and spiritual mapping. When I allow the Holy Spirit to lead me to people of peace - praying as I go.
- 1 Maintaining the disciplines of prayer and Bible reading, with a focus on what Christ has accomplished for me.
- 1 Reading the Bible and a devotional, listening to how God speaks to me through them and praying for spiritual growth, direction for the day, and for the people God has laid on my heart and who are on my daily prayer lists.
- 1 Through prayer we have direct communion, and what follows is intimacy. Through celebration my heart can know God

and my relation to him. Bible reading and study are important in order to know what God clearly says to us today.

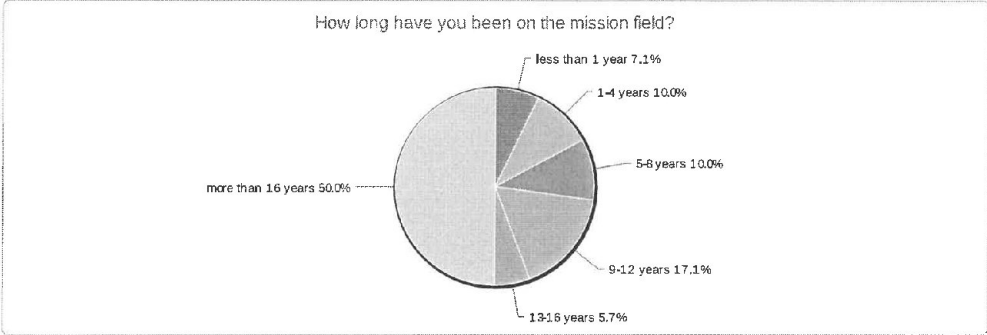
- 1 The "silence of beholding" and communion with God bring me the greatest sense of intimacy with God. It's like my soul becomes entangled with Him for brief moments.
- 1 Worship with music brings me closer to Christ than anything else. I can let myself feel the words and praise God without too much to hinder it.
- 1 Reflectively reading my bible, journaling, and worship give me a strong sense of intimacy with God.
- 1 Prayer, confession and reflection bring me the greatest sense of intimacy with God. Fellowship and worship also bring me close to God.
- 1 Reading His Word and praying, as well as using my resources to help other ministries. SHARING THE GOSPEL!!!
- 1 Daily Quiet time Studying Bible in Discipleship with others Playing the piano for God Giving so that missionaries can continue their work.
- 1 mighty works in answer to prayer mighty testing, coming through in answer to prayer when God works in others through me/us
- 1 Lectio Divina, with journaling, listening, and prayer in combination. My meetings with a spiritual director are extremely helpful in bringing me back to the essentials.
- 1 Bible study often leads me to worship. Prayer, especially extended times alone in a quiet atmosphere. When I share spiritual truths with others.
- 1 Being with Him on an extended spiritual retreat, fasting and reading His Word and having time in nature for walks or time to "pause" and meditate and listen for His voice. The extended time seems to get me back on track and re-calibrated to hearing God's voice.
- 1 Quiet times listening to God using HIS word to praise Him, letting that wash over me, and having HIS word speak truth into my life. Also, times of collective prayer.
- 1 Reading helpful devotional books as a supplement to Scripture. Helping to see that my journey with God is just as valid as other believers now and in the past.
- 1 I love talking out loud to God and having long times of prayer where I can talk with Him. I enjoy listening to the Scripture, especially long portions of the Bible at one time. I like having times of worship with my iPod.
- 1 I find that spiritual retreats are the best practice in developing intimacy with the Lord. These supplement daily devotions and a weekly morning devoted to prayer with fasting. I believe that being in an accountability group also works in deepening my intimacy with God.
- 1 Every once in a while I can just get out and hike in silence and I feel God meets me there. But who has time for that regularly. I do not think my supporters want me wandering around by myself. I have a busy ministry/work schedule coupled with lots of email and correspondence. This is true of everyone I know in ministry - it is just the way it is. God is blessed by my sacrifice of gutting it out and the fact that my support continues to me is God's approval of how things are going - it is tiring, but I am doing what I need to do.
- 1 Retreat, time in solitude with God including long periods of time in the Bible and just listening. Prayer, a daily constant communication with God instead of my own thoughts; listening and sharing and observing.
- 1 Personal Bible study & writing down the lessons I've learned from the Bible that day. I also pray regularly with certain people who are people of prayer (mostly so that I can learn to pray myself). I've also found that the deep study required to prepare sermons is a tremendous blessing... I find that God gives me so much good material from His Word that I end up cutting out good things just to keep the sermons to a proper length. I take that as a personal blessing to the person preparing the sermon.
- 1 Prayer Reading God's word and applying it to my life Bible study with others and seeing God at work in their lives
- 1 Regular Bible reading and prayer help me most. Bible Study in groups with others is also encouraging.
- 1 1. Reflecting on scripture, pondering it, creating hymns based on it, and in so doing, suddenly the Holy Spirit takes over, reveals the deeper, the overwhelming, in the truth about His love, His plan, both universally and in my life. 2. In times of testing (pain, grief, loss, human insecurity), just "letting go", dropping into the arms of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, Who is ALWAYS there.
- 1 I have the greatest sense of intimacy with God when I go through my day in constant conversation with Him. I pray, listen for His direction, respond, remind myself of scripture.
- 1 prayer, especially thanksgiving for what God has done, and is doing, in my life and in those close to me
- 1 The two polar, but necessary, opposites seem to do this for me most: solitude and spiritual community.
- 1 Spending time reading the Bible devotionally, meditating on it, reflecting on my life and asking God to speak to my situation about God's will, and worship through art and music. Confession, submission and adoration are also very helpful.
- 1 Being in His Word and in prayer - with these I come to know God more both in the head and in the hear

70. In two or three sentences, what are the greatest hindrances to deepening your intimacy with God?

Count	Response
1	Admitting my own humanity - residing in the "room of good-intentions" (ala John Lynch)
1	Becoming too busy, having heavy deadlines.
1	Being too busy, becoming distracted easily
1	Busy schedule.
1	Busy-ness, technology (internet, telephone, TV), personal sin
1	Busyness - physically and mentally
1	Busyness and lack of discipline.
1	Busyness, apathy, lack of discipline.
1	Demands of raising a family
1	Getting into a rut and time can sometimes be a factor. Illness.
1	I do not find many hindrances now that the children are not at home.
1	I often fail to allocate adequate time in my schedule for many of the disciplines.
1	I would say unconfessed sin, apathy and the distractions of the world.
1	LIFE!
1	Lack of discipline; Just Do It.
1	Lack of time.
1	Letting other things crowd out the time needed for deepening my relationship with Him.
1	My own flesh/laziness are my greatest hindrances--giving in to the tyranny of the urgent.
1	My own sinful nature, laziness, time pressures.
1	My sinful heart and my love of self are my greatest hindrances.
1	Normal daily life with all of my responsibilities. The enemy.
1	Not depending on feelings
1	Not enough energy put into disciplining my daily (and monthly) schedule.
1	Sitting still Sitting still
1	TV, Complacency (feeling I've been there done that) Pace of life
1	The noise of life, business, pouring so much out into ministry.
1	Thinking I don't have time.
1	Time, activeness
1	Tyranny of the urgent Need for great self discipline
1	When travelling it's hard to maintain a time with God.
1	busyness lack of concentration tiredness
1	busyness of life
1	my 'making time' putting out fires distractions
1	my own sinful desires to do things my way, in my own strength
1	only myself
1	overactive guilt complex; my own sin;
1	sin and physical health, business, entertainment hinder me from deepening my intimacy with god
1	sitting in frt of computers my own laziness and lethargy
1	work
1	Schedule is too busy, so not taking the time, especially for longer solitude and reflection times, even though those are the most meaningful. Lack of a good place to go for the times of solitude (especially 24 hours away).
1	Too busy with the work of God, but the busyness is also the blessing. We are doing some really important things. Later in life I look forward to a time when I can reflect and read more - now I need to focus on the work.
1	Distractions of the every day life are the biggest hinderance. I will often experience some kind of interruption (usually a person wants my attention) when I feel like I am connecting with the Lord.
1	Being too busy to stop and take the time - there seems to be too many expectations sometimes so you feel like you have to do over just "being" sometimes.

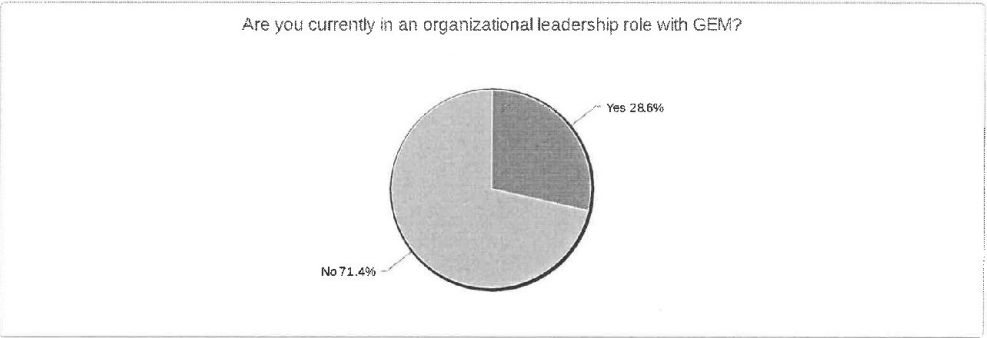
- 1 The biggest one is TIME! With the demands of family, ministry (leading multiple weekly Bible studies, seminars, preaching) & work (prayer letters, financial, field leadership), it's a constant challenge to make sure that I plan enough time so that I can accomplish the other things while I am full and satisfied with God's presence. It requires constant vigilance to allow the other things to take second place.
- 1 Just not taking longer periods of time to get away and spend with God. Not having my spouse share in spiritual disciplines.
- 1 I think, that regardless of life circumstances that make some disciplines more difficult to practice, it comes down to my SELF that hinders them. It takes faith to organize life and make things happen. And acceptance that different life phases will often have different foci of disciplines.
- 1 Without question, the greatest hindrance to spending more time in deepening my intimacy with God is lack of time due to responsibilities with our mission organization which are often beyond my control.
- 1 I think the greatest hindrance for me is finding time to be alone in God's presence. It is easy to let a busy household and ministry responsibilities crowd out that precious time.
- 1 Time and energy are my biggest issues. My schedule is very full right now and I have to make time for Christ everyday.
- 1 (1) Lack of a mentor to set an example for me, to encourage me, to hold me accountable; (2) listening to hear the voice of God or guidance of the Holy Spirit; (3) more prayer for his concerns and the concerns of others.
- 1 I guess that the urgency of the moment always trumps the time to come away. I often reflect on Liddell words that "God created me fast and when I run, I feel His pleasure."
- 1 Feeling rushed, or distracted by too much responsibility or activity. Not having a silent worshipful atmosphere. My own rebellion.
- 1 Consistency in my habit so they truly become habits. Also, outpouring to others through outreach or ministry. Times when I notice breaks in my spiritual disciplines are times when I am not as active in ministry.
- 1 I am task orientated, so I do not do a good job with Sabbaths or personal retreats. When I get out of the habit of anything, I have to work hard to be intentional and make it a habit again (I used to do better at memorizing Scripture and fasting, but now I've lost the habit, so I haven't done it in a while).
- 1 Selfishness, distractions, lack of obedience and lack of self discipline all hinder my intimacy with God. Perhaps doubt and lack of faith contribute also.
- 1 Sin, being "too busy", and the distractions of the world (i.e. living in a world that doesn't value or promote intimacy with God but wars against it).
- 1 I lack a thirst for God and do not long to be in His presence. I have a hard time maintaining the disciplines long enough for them to become a habit.
- 1 My schedule can be a hindrance unless I master it. Unplanned happenings, especially with family or friends, can lessen deep time with God.
- 1 The greatest hindrances to deepening my intimacy with God are being too busy. I begin to feel pressure to complete tasks and this competes with a quiet time. I am restless and feel pressure to keep in motion. I see the value in having consistent times with God (reflected in work & life) and then I let busy-ness squeeze out my time with the Lord and I have to fight (myself mostly) to get consistent time alone with God. His Word and prayer back in my schedule.
- 1 My lack of scheduling times for personal retreat right now is hindering me from developing intimacy. Also, I'm too cautious and not hungry enough for the Lord. I believe more consistent times with my spiritual advisor would help as well.
- 1 Busyness and life pressure that may disrupt my normal spiritual rhythms and take my eye off seeking the King and His rule in my life. Distraction and unbelief that causes me to revert back to preferring my rule and will over Jesus' rule and reign.
- 1 My life stage hinders intimacy with God. I am rarely alone and don't have many quiet moments. Also, lack of knowledge about how to develop under-used disciplines.
- 1 I struggle with the lack of favor and protection in this world for God's faithful people. I have always struggled with Job, and the necessity of Jesus dying and other similar stories. I guess I am a spoiled adopted child! I want Daddy to take care of everything for me.
- 1 Busyness of the life in ministry (guilt that I'm not doing enough outreach, etc.), I live alone and am single and I am better suited to spiritual practices in community.
- 1 Expectations of others and mission leaders. Feeling that I must perform before I can be worthy of God's love. Feeling that my acceptance is conditioned upon performance.
- 1 I can be a workaholic. Also, the apartment we live in is small, and it can be hard to have complete focus when my wife is around. I really need to have no one else around when I am with the Lord.
- 1 When I get too task oriented and when distractions take me away from time in the Word and with Him.
- 1 Finding regular time in at least 1-hour blocks or more. Short times with spiritual disciplines help, but don't suffice.... I need more regular and longer times, and ministry easily overwhelms my schedule.

- 1 Busyness of complicated modern life. Preoccupations with human fears (of failure, ineffectiveness, etc.) Doubting. Comparing myself with others. Forgetting to be thankful.



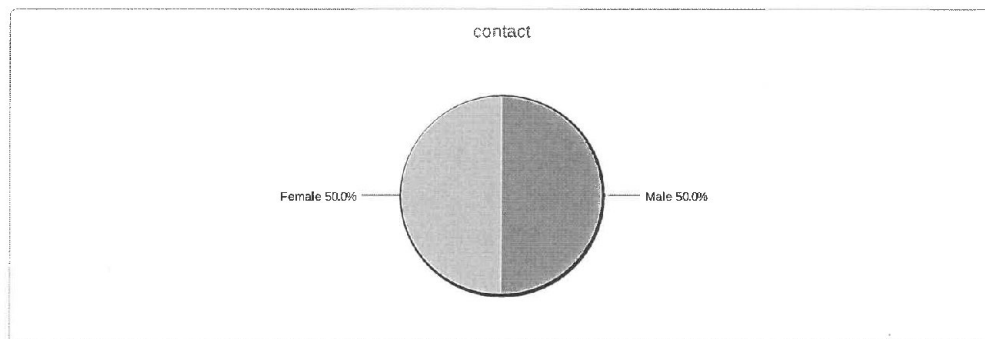
71. How long have you been on the mission field?

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
less than 1 year	5	7.1%	Total Responses	70
1-4 years	7	10%	Sum	202.0
5-8 years	7	10%	Average	6.7
9-12 years	12	17.1%	StdDev	3.96
13-16 years	4	5.7%	Max	13.0
more than 16 years	35	50%		



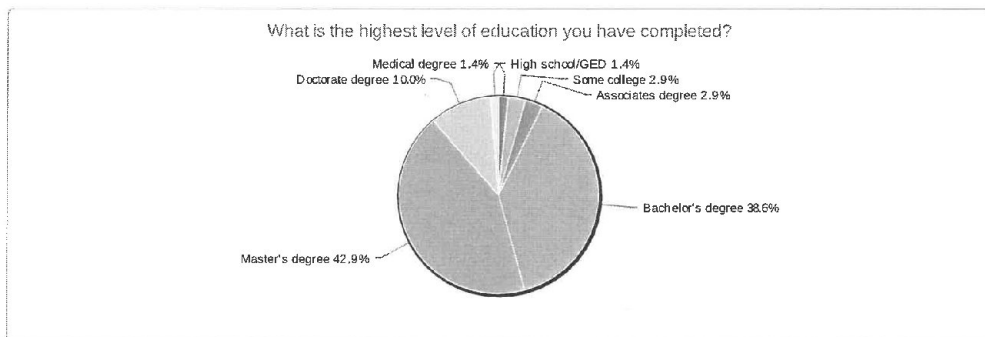
72. Are you currently in an organizational leadership role with GEM?

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Yes	20	28.6%	Total Responses	70
No	50	71.4%		



73. contact

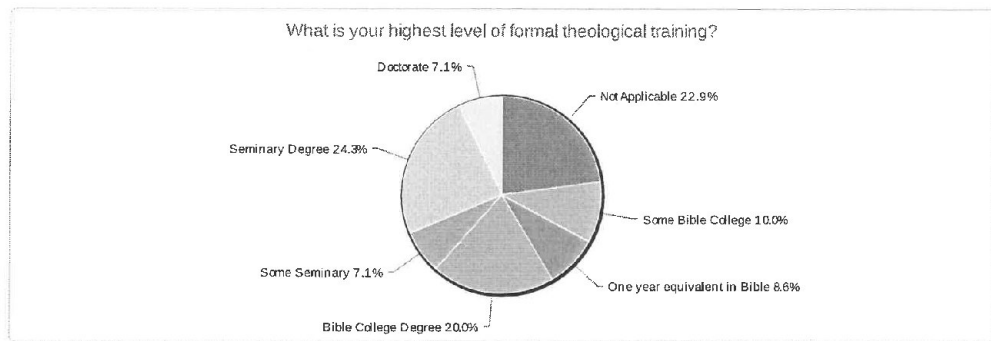
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Male	35	50%	Total Responses	70
Female	35	50%		



74. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

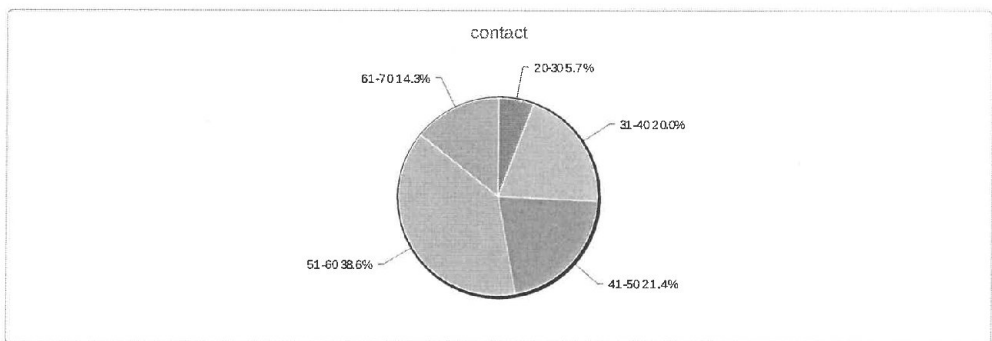
Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
High school/GED	1	1.4%	Total Responses	70
Some college	2	2.9%		
Associates degree	2	2.9%		
Bachelor's degree	27	38.6%		
Master's degree	30	42.9%		
Doctorate degree	7	10%		
Medical degree	1	1.4%		





**75. What is your highest level of formal theological training?**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
Not Applicable	16	22.9%	Total Responses	70
Some Bible College	7	10%		
One year equivalent in Bible	6	8.6%		
Bible College Degree	14	20%		
Some Seminary	5	7.1%		
Seminary Degree	17	24.3%		
Doctorate	5	7.1%		



**76. contact**

Value	Count	Percent %	Statistics	
20-30	4	5.7%	Total Responses	70
31-40	14	20%	Sum	3,116.0
41-50	15	21.4%	Average	44.5
51-60	27	38.6%	StdDev	11.34
61-70	10	14.3%	Max	61.0

**Time Spent on Survey**

Count	Response
2	1011
1	1052

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